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THE CLINTON KEYBOARD BY DOUGLAS COUPLAND
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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

NOVEMBER 22, 1993

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 4,114

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 209, Number 21, Issue 4,114, November 22, 1993. (Printed in the U.S. on November 3, 1993.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 4 & 11, July 19 & 26, Aug. 23 & 30, and Sept. 20 & 27, 1993) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. The New Republic Sales Office (212) 702-4882. Yearly subscriptions, $69.97; foreign, $99.97; Canada, $84.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling).

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(ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Internet mail address: editors@tnr.com Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 602, Mount Morris, IL 61054. For subscription problems call 800-827-1289.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Social insecurity

To the editors:

In his October 25 TRB ("Pete's Plan"), Michael Kinsley criticizes Social Security for "transferring money from poorer people to richer ones." That's a harsh indictment, if true. But it's not. Despite the cap on taxable wages, the best-off fifth of all families (incomes above $55,000) pays almost half the Social Security taxes. But the best-off fifth of Social Security recipients (incomes above $39,000) gets only about 20 percent of the after-tax benefits. In other words, taxes paid by the better-off cover not only retirement benefits for higher-income people but a large share of the benefits that go to lower-income people as well. That hardly looks like "redistributing income upward," as Kinsley claims.

Kinsley and others like to point out that if one analyzes the Social Security tax and the Social Security retirement benefit structure in isolation from one another, each seems bad. The tax is regressive (because it's capped); average benefits are close to flat (after-tax), regardless of income group. But put the two together and you find a progressive retirement system that's lasted for more than half a century, and has come close to wiping out poverty among the elderly. FDR's notion that structuring Social Security on a quasi-pension model would ensure its political longevity has met the test of time.

To be sure, we could imagine a Social Security system that is even more progressive. If Social Security were like welfare, then the best-off fifth would pay about two-thirds of the taxes, but get none of the (direct) benefits. But would such a system really work? The poor political fortunes of welfare over the years suggest otherwise.

In fact, Social Security benefits for better-off people have been cut substantially over the past decade. In 1983 half of Social Security benefits were made taxable above certain income thresholds, and this year's Clinton budget bill raised the taxable percentage to 85 percent. Together, these changes reduced benefits by about a fifth for the best-off 10 percent of retirees, and by a third for those with the very highest retirement incomes. One can at least worry that such sharp benefit cuts might lead to reduced political support for Social Security by upper-income workers—and there is some evidence that such a fear may be well-founded.

Of course, in theory we could take wealthier people out of the Social Security system entirely (at least prospectively), on the ground that they don't need the government's help to plan for retirement. That would satisfy people like Kinsley who are scandalized that better-off retirees get Social Security checks. But Social Security would be in big trouble if it lost the wealthy's tax payments as a trade-off for cutting off their benefits. Indeed, Social Security would be running far in the red, rather than enjoying a surplus. At that point, pundits like Kinsley could more reasonably blame Social Security for our budget deficit problem.

Kinsley has suggested in other columns that it might be okay for the government to run a national health insurance program—even one financed extremely regressively (like the current health system and President Clinton's proposed reforms). But why then isn't it okay for the government to run a retirement program that's far more progressive than any private alternative?

ROBERT S. MCINTYRE
Director, Citizens for Tax Justice
Washington, D.C.

Michael Kinsley replies:

My point was not that Social Security taken as a whole "transfers money from poor people to rich ones." It was that opponents of the Concord Coalition's proposed *reform* of Social Security and other entitlement programs—which would start scaling back those entitlements at $40,000 of income—must favor transferring money from poorer people to richer ones, since $40,000, though hardly great affluence, is well above the median family income. Whether or not Social Security is progressive now, the Concord reform would make it *more* progressive. How can we ever curb the deficit if progressives regard *upward* income redistribution as sacrosanct?

Croativity

To the editors:

It may be wise for media representatives to check the political pedigrees of some of President Franjo Tudjman's critics before giving them space in journals or on T.V. screens ("Croatianism," by Ivo Banac, October 25). The most virulent of them stem from the Yugoslav Titoist tree. A substantial number supped at the trough of Communist Yugoslavia. Until recently, they made spiritual pilgrimages to Moscow and Havana. Now, of course, they find it more rewarding to make journeys to their left-leaning superegos in Washington and Paris. Like scores of European and American intellectuals, Tudjman's critics, at home and abroad, exchanged the Freudo-Marxian scholasticism for the ideology of human rights.

It is very easy to put the blame on President Tudjman for every little defect in Croatia. Yet, in view of the quasi state of emergency in this war-torn state, which is still subject to regular Serbian military harassment, it is grotesque to use peacetime standards for measuring the freedom of speech in Croatia. If I recall well, in 1992 the American government enforced a partial news blackout during the Gulf war—despite the fact that Iraq lies thousands of miles away from the United States. Back in the late 1950s a very democratic France, under President Charles de Gaulle, incarcerated many French-based Algerian Muslims during the war in distant Algeria. Last, but not least, in April 1992 President George Bush did not send Bible preachers, hippies or legal experts to pontificate to black Los Angeles rioters. He sent elite soldiers instead.

Is it not ironic that the same people who complain about the lack of media freedom in Croatia often do so in an allegedly unfree media? Some foreign journalists and some Croatian opposition figures may freely and openly complain about being silenced in the Croat media. But where were they when thousands of Croat men and women were silenced by the Communist police in ex-Yugoslavia?

TOMISLAV SUNIC
Foreign Media Adviser
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Zagreb, Croatia

To the editors:

There were several articles in the October 25 issue that because of their content and their objectivity will be used by the Croatian and Bosnian communities as reference sources for a long time. It was very encouraging, in particular, to see someone of Ivo Banac's stature and intellect have the courage and the conviction to speak out. It is very unfortunate that because of the lack of "checks and balances" in the current system, the opinions of those who disagree with the government of Croatia must sometimes be expressed in the foreign media.

Too many Croatians are suffering from the "Emperor's New Clothes" syndrome. We are either so overwhelmed by the fact that we are getting our country back after 700 years or we are just intimidated into silence. The notion that even 60 percent of Croatia being free is better than nothing at all is clouding our judgment. The fact is that we should be much more aggressive in completely liberating our lands from the Serbs and also work harder to create a true, Western democracy in Croatia. Dismemberment of Bosnia, lack of an adequate forum for the opposition and a de facto one-party rule are just a few of the actions that take away

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from the elation of a 700-year-old dream fulfilled: freedom.

STJEPAN BALOG
Warren, Michigan

To the editors:

It is not surprising that Patrick Glynn can get so hot under the collar about a problem that is fiendishly complex and that does not lend itself to simplistic solutions ("See No Evil," October 25). To vent his ire on the Bush and Clinton administrations is understandable but possibly misguided.

Many of us have viewed the atrocities in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the same anguish and feelings of helplessness that Patrick Glynn obviously shares. The helplessness stems from reviewing all the options and coming to the inescapable conclusion that military intervention by the United States was never really on. The European Community had preempted U.S. action by recognizing the splinter states of the former Yugoslavia and by placing troops in Bosnia in peacekeeping roles. These troops then became a reason for inaction, i.e., their safety was a prime consideration. Diplomacy was the preferred method of action and various peace-brokering efforts were made by the Europeans, genuine efforts that eventually came up short. They were not dealing with honorable men, and yes, the majority of the blame does lie with the Serbs. The Europeans specifically asked the United States not to act unilaterally while peace efforts were being made.

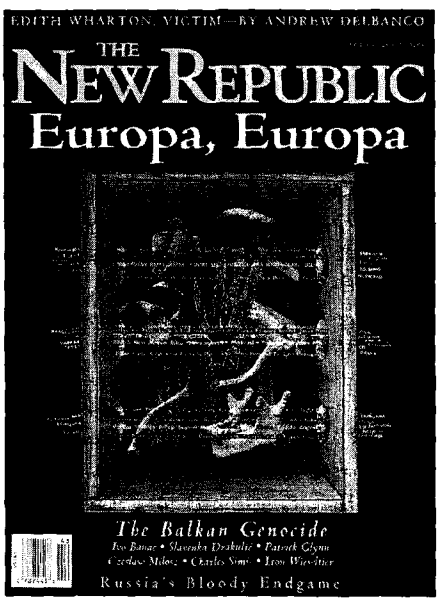
Should the United States act unilaterally in such situations? The United States can ignore the Europeans, and in certain parts of the world it should. But should it ignore its European allies and go against their wishes when the conflict is in Europe? It is surely not possible to act unilaterally in Europe. It is only with hindsight that we know that the peace-brokering efforts were doomed to failure. The U.S. domestic environment is not sympathetic to sending troops anywhere they might get hurt. This anomaly, having the world's most powerful army but not tolerating casualties, is a product of our television. Every casualty is a story. Every story becomes a nail in a politician's coffin. That's how our system works.

ANTHONY SWEENEY
Darien, Connecticut

A doctor writes

o the editors:

As a young primary care physician in private practice, I find Walter Zelman's recent argument that the cause of the *current health care crisis* is that "the demand side has had little ability to keep the supply side in check" ridiculous ("The Horse's Mouth," October 11); it seems a bit like blaming our epidemic national levels of obesity on potato chip manufacturers. Like some of my patients who eat less high-fat food and are thinner (and usually healthier), some of my patients choose to have fewer risky or questionable medical procedures performed. In situations in which I might refer patients for specialty care, I try to present my understanding of current knowledge and allow them to decide whether to proceed. Admittedly, choosing a medical procedure is not like choosing a potato chip; the net result to the patient, either positive or negative, is usually impossible to predict with certainty, and few patients are paying much out of pocket for their procedure if they decide to proceed. At the same time, the element of choice remains—patients often want the latest procedure, even if the likelihood of cure seems low. I would argue that the demand side is still driving the supply side in medicine.



A burgeoning elderly population and its legitimate needs for acute and chronic health care are really causing our current crisis. A chronologic review of Medicaid expenditures, designed as a safety net for the young and working poor, proves this point; the reason that there isn't money to pay for our 37 million uninsured is that nursing home costs now account for about half of most Medicaid budgets. Again, the demand side, related to a demographic shift, is driving expenditures.

STEPHEN J. EVANS, M.D.
Williamsville, New York

Voting and the Constitution

To the editors:

Jeffrey Rosen makes an interesting distinction between what the Voting Rights Act requires and what the Constitution allows ("Gerrymandered," October 25). Congress passed the act under the powers granted it by the enforcement clauses of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. The question Rosen needs to answer is whether, if the act were repealed, the Supreme Court would require the "creation of minority districts" under the amendments. If the answer is yes, the existence of the act ultimately wouldn't matter. Citizens bringing suits would force the districts' creations, though this would happen more slowly than it would under the enforcement and injunction provision of the act.

If the answer is no, how could Congress enforce a "right" that the Court says does not exist? Even if a state *could* create such a district without violating the Constitution, the fact would remain that it could constitutionally refuse to do so. There is a whole range of districting plans that a state could, without violating the amendments, adopt. There are also plans that would be held unconstitutional. But as long as a districting is in the permissible range—i.e., does not violate the amendments—how could Congress, acting solely under its power to enforce them, prohibit something that does not violate them?

Perhaps Rosen's answer to this question is *Katzenbach* v. *Morgan* (1966), in which the Court upheld the constitutionality of a Voting Rights Act prohibition of a voting literacy test that was not held to be unconstitutional in *Katzenbach* or in any previous Court decision. If so, he should explain how Justice Brennan's opinion in that case is not subject to the above objections.

THOMAS A. ZITVER
Washington, D.C.

Dippy

To the editors:

L.J. Davis ("The New Boss," November 1) nicely mangles a famous Johnsonian dictum and dippily suggests it was evoked by a "talking dog (or was it a mathematical horse?)." The actual and regrettably un-P.C. remark was: "A woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on its hinder legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all." Which reminds me of the Johnsonian aperçu that I always expect to see deployed in your relentless exposés of political mendacity, but never do: "*Grand* nonsense is insupportable." Johnson's italics. Well, maybe Boswell's.

GARY SCHMIDGALL
New York, New York

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TRB®

FROM WASHINGTON

Pear pressure

Forty percent of Americans will pay more for health insurance under President Clinton's reform plan. Scare stories to this effect dominated the news over Halloween weekend. The administration was forced to admit that about 25 percent of Americans will pay more for somewhat better coverage than they now have, and that 15 percent will pay more for the same coverage. Opposition ghouls gleefully pounced on these figures as proof that the Clinton plan is fatally flawed.

The fuss is ridiculous, for two reasons. First, virtually all Americans will pay more for health insurance under Clinton's reform, other reforms or no reform at all. Nothing will stop the rise of health care costs; the best hope is to slow that rise.

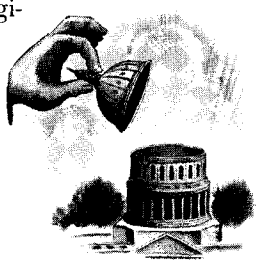
Second, the particular reason the Clinton reform will raise some people's insurance costs is that it requires insurance companies to take all comers at nondiscriminatory rates. Right now insurers are free to refuse bad risks (people with "pre-existing conditions," etc.), or charge them a lot more. That will have to stop. Obviously, though, if the companies are henceforth required to "pool" the bad-risk customers with good-risk customers, those good risks—the young and healthy—will have to pay more.

But the key point is that every health care plan now circulating on Capitol Hill contains a similar insurance reform. Indeed insurance nondiscrimination is even more central to the various Republican alternatives than it is to Clinton's plan, since they leave out so much else. All these rival plans would also raise insurance rates for the young and healthy. Indeed it is difficult to imagine a health reform that would not. (Even a Canadian-style single-payer plan does this in effect.)

Did someone say "change"? Change, far from being what everyone wants, is virtually impossible in our political culture. Whose fault is this? I blame Robert Pear of *The New York Times*. Pear, who covers health care, is a legendarily diligent and scrupulous reporter. It's not really his fault that his stories of the past few weeks, since Clinton's big health care speech, form a pageant of political paralysis.

Consider. September 30: "AMA REBELS OVER HEALTH PLAN." October 11: "CLINTON CARE PLAN MAY CUT BENEFITS TO *SOME CHILDREN*." October 18: "*HEADS OF* HMOs HAVE CONCERNS ON HEALTH PLAN." October 20: "LOCAL GOVERNMENTS MAY PAY MORE IN HEALTH PLAN." October 21: "BUSINESS GROUP ASSAILS SCOPE AND COST OF CLINTON HEALTH PLAN." October 24: "INFLUENTIAL GROUP SAYS HEALTH PLAN SLIGHTS THE AGED." And so on.

Of course criticism of Clinton's plan is perfectly legitimate and some criticisms may even be valid. But this cacophony of complaint illustrates the challenge faced by any major social reform. First, many of the complaints are contradictory. Youth advocates complain that the plan favors the elderly, while the elderly complain that the plan discriminates against them. While conservatives charge a "federal takeover" of health care, HMO administrators object to regulation by fifty different state agencies.



And there's no pleasing some people. The American Medical Association objects to a "bias toward managed care," while the HMO types—who ought to be pleased by this—worry "about their ability to handle a surge in membership." As a sop to the elderly, the Clintonites kept Medicare as a separate program; lobbyists for the elderly now complain that the standard package for the nonelderly includes some benefits not in Medicare. Meanwhile, children's advocates complain that the process of merging Medicaid into the larger system will reduce some benefits—not for the poor, but for the near-poor.

If I were Clinton, I would cut a deal in a hurry. I would invite Senators John Chafee and Bob Dole, co-sponsors of the most palatable Republican plan, and Representative Jim Cooper, who's pushing a self-described "Clinton-lite" bipartisan alternative, up to Camp David for a weekend and settle this. (O.K., Hillary can come, too.) Because the longer Bob Pear and his ilk are allowed to roam the landscape kicking interest groups until they bark, the more it will seem as if Clinton's reform plan is full of terrible disadvantages that rival plans somehow magically avoid.

The outlines of a compromise are not hard to see. The standard benefit package can be less generous, at least at first. The various price-control mechanisms in Clinton's version can be weakened or even abandoned. After all, the opposing plans generally have no market-oriented price restraints that Clinton doesn't also have. If increased competition works as predicted, top-down controls won't be needed. If it doesn't, controls will have to be added later. Even the contentious issue of employer mandates can be fudged if the other guys are willing to be more honest than they have been about where the money for the currently uninsured is to come from instead. Employers could be required to pick up, say, 50 percent or 60 percent of the cost, instead of Clinton's proposed 80 percent.

Clinton might be reluctant to make a quick compromise on health care because the current take on him is that he's a trimmer. That was Fred Barnes's theme in these pages last week. And Fred is not alone. "One of the enduring questions," writes the magisterial R.W. Apple of the *Times*, "is whether Mr. Clinton has specific policy goals in which he is willing to invest his political capital." In fact, that is only this month's question. Six months ago the "enduring" question was whether Clinton was proving to be a hardened, left-wing ideologue whose refusal to compromise betrayed his promise to be a "New Democrat." Clinton cannot win this game. So why play it?

Some form of health care reform is pretty sure to pass. The political danger to Clinton is that he won't get the credit. Ronald Reagan managed to get the lion's share of credit for the 1986 tax reform, even though it originated in a revolt against Reagan's earlier tax bills (and in particular the revelation that many big corporations were paying no taxes at all as a result). Clinton, by contrast, put health care reform onto the national agenda. If it weren't for him and his victory last year, Republicans would have been content to let the problem fester. Whatever emerges will be the biggest expansion of the welfare state in decades. Yet there is some risk that, after a year or more of potshots, the Republicans will be able to present the ultimate product as a defeat for Clinton and a victory for conservatives who saved the country from Clintonite big-government socialism.

That would be annoying, to say the least.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

NOVEMBER 22, 1993

CLINTON AND DINKINS

Local races can always be overinterpreted for national trends, and the temptation to do so now, in the wake of elections in Virginia, New York City and New Jersey, should, by and large, be resisted. There were, after all, conflicting messages: the conservative Republican George Allen won stunningly in Virginia, but his running mate, Michael Farris, supported by the religious right, was defeated; Jim Florio governed at least in part on the principle of fiscal accountability and the voters punished him; David Dinkins represented a far less accountable and irresolute approach to governing, and the voters punished him, too. The victories of Rudolph Giuliani and Christine Todd Whitman, moreover, do not inspire confidence. Both refused to admit to the budget cutting they will face in office; and so they will have a hard time constructing the political support for it in the years ahead. They represent more free-lunch politics.

For President Clinton, however, there are some sobering implications. For one thing, James Carville is no magician—he failed to stem Whitman's late crest against Florio. If the president thinks his political fortunes can be rescued by campaign strategy, then he's deluding himself. For another, New York was the latest in a long line of Old Democrat failures. The race, finally, represented less Giuliani's victory than Dinkins's defeat. Clinton directly associated himself and his administration with Dinkins's campaign, raising the political stakes in New York, and suggesting to voters that, far from being a new broom for the Democrats, he was himself a Dinkins-style pol. Clinton also played the Old Democrat race card in a particularly noisome way, suggesting that only whites could vote racially, and failing to see that New York's bewilderingly complex racial (and immigrant) mix has made "black-white" politics a crude and dated instrument. The result is that Clinton himself has been damaged by the New York result, not simply by the election of a mediocre Republican, but by the message he subliminally gave in the campaign: that the president was himself just a Democratic loyalist, that ineffectual and passive governance was something he could passionately support.

This is a potentially fatal mistake. Throughout the country, as Jim Sleeper reported recently in these pages (see "The End of the Rainbow," November 1), and as Bill Clinton surely knows, the old-style Democratic politics of minority coalitions and public-sector complacency has been collapsing. From Philadelphia to Chicago to Los Angeles and now to New York, realist, activist, practical New Democrat or Republican administrations have been elected to tackle crime, streamline the public sector, battle entrenched city hall unions, reform welfare and break from old-style rainbow racial politics. Giuliani doesn't quite fit this pattern. He failed to do what Richard Daley did in Chicago and what Ed Rendell did in Philadelphia and win with a racially diverse coalition. (Daley defeated a black opponent with 26 percent of the black vote; Rendell won 20 percent of the black vote against black Democratic opponents. Virtually no African Americans in New York voted for Giuliani; 97 percent voted for Dinkins in what appears to have been a heavy turnout.) But Dinkins surely does fit the pattern: an ineffective, archaic, old-style Democrat unable to adjust to the new racial and political dynamic in our major cities. He was predictably ejected.

When Clinton was elected, it was partly because he seemed to represent a different kind of Democrat than a Woo or a Dinkins, and might be able to transfer some of his practical New Democrat experience at the local level into the affairs of the federal government. And in modest ways, he has realized this hope—cutting the budget deficit a little, "reinventing government," withdrawing the nomination of Lani Guinier, fighting, eventually, for NAFTA—but in others, he is still sending the wrong signals. His portrayal of health care reform as a new entitlement, without spelling out the sacrifice it will entail; his tendency to conciliate, rather than challenge, when old Democratic constituencies stand in the way of change; his delaying of aggressive welfare reform until 1994; his increasingly passive presentation of policy options in dealing with Congress; his failure to see that crime is an issue that could unite races rather than divide them, and is the critical "security" issue facing the country: all of these are in the style of Dinkins. And all of them, if uncorrected, could deliver to the president the same rebuff as that just delivered the mayor. Happily, Clinton has plenty of time to recover and adjust. We just hope he has seen the smoke signals to his north. •

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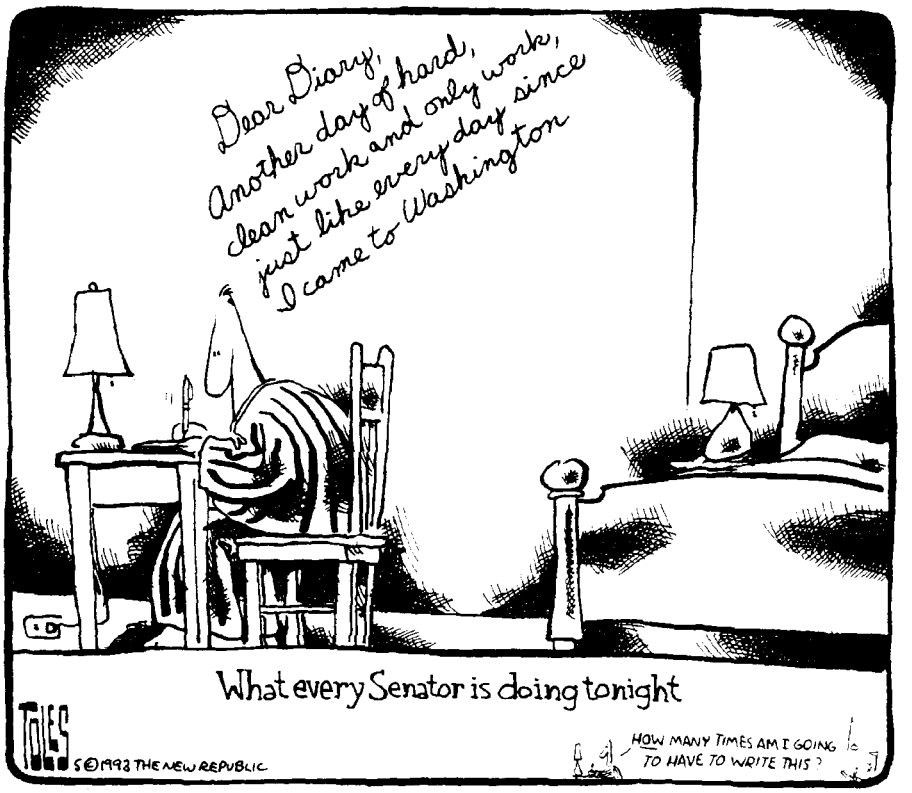
NOTEBOOK

PACKWOOD AND LIBERTY!: One aspect of the Packwood case that has so far gone unnoticed is its profound historical echo. We refer to the cause célèbre in colonial times, in which the Crown attempted to seize the diaries of John Wilkes, a notorious womanizer and member of the British parliament. In those days, however, the result was somewhat different. Public outrage over the Wilkes case was a central force behind the passage of the Fourth Amendment, which protects "the right of the people to be secure in their *papers, and effects,* against unreasonable searches and seizures." Wilkes's career had its Packwoodian moments as well. He ended his public life as a member of a scandalous secret society, dressing in masquerade, writing pornographic songs and eventually fleeing to France to escape an obscenity prosecution. But as a young legislator, he became an American hero in 1763 when he wrote an anonymous screed in the *North Briton Review* attacking the tax on hard cider imposed by the Earl of Bute and George III. Wilkes was arrested after Lord Halifax, the secretary of state, issued a sweeping warrant authorizing the king's messengers to break into people's houses and seize their diaries and papers. At his trial, Wilkes objected—à la Packwood—that "my most private and secret concerns [have been] divulged"; and "Wilkes and Liberty!" became a rallying cry for the American Revolution. A pamphlet on the Wilkes affair objected that diaries are "the most intimate companions of our bosom," and should never be thrown open to government inspectors who will "naturally amuse themselves with the perusal of all private letters, memorandum, secrets and intrigues of the gentleman himself, and of all his friends and acquaintances of both sexes." Two years later, Lord Camden became the most lionized judge in the colonies after he held that if searches and seizures of diaries were permitted, "the secret cabinets and bureaus of every subject in this kingdom will be thrown open to the search and inspection of a messenger." We're second to no one in decrying Packwood's harassment of women, and have called on him repeatedly to resign. But there is something perverse about the consensus that Packwood doesn't have a legal leg to stand on in his battle with the Senate. In fact, the Supreme Court has not squarely revisited the Wilkes case since 1886, when it approvingly cited Lord Camden's opinion and reaffirmed the Fourth Amendment's central concern for the sanctity of diaries. To be sure, Packwood may have waived his right to conceal some portions of his diaries when his lawyers ineptly offered them in his own defense. But although this might justify a narrowly focused subpoena, the vast intrusion that the Senate has endorsed should have every civil libertarian knee a-jerking.


Dear Diary,
Another day of hard,
clean work and only work,
just like every day since
I came to Washington
What every Senator is doing tonight
TOLES
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HOW MANY TIMES AM I GOING TO HAVE TO WRITE THIS?

TEDDY'S LEGACY: Of all the municipal elections this past Tuesday, none was so surprising, and with so melancholy a result, as the one in Jerusalem. Teddy Kollek, 83, had served as mayor for twenty-eight years. When someone so old has served so long, it would be a mistake to overinterpret the reasons for voters deciding for a change. Still, there is no escaping the sense of loss. Kollek was the last of the founders of the Jewish state still in public life. He served as the right-hand man of the country's first prime minister, David Ben Gurion, and, before that, smuggled Holocaust survivors and the guns they needed into Jewish Palestine. He was a realist with regard to the political aspirations of the Arabs, but adamant in strengthening the Jewish population and, with that, the Jewish warrant to Jerusalem. For all that, he was still seen by the Israeli right as too dovish, and his defeat at the hands of the Likudnik, Ehud Olmert, is a result of a massive turnout of the ultra-Orthodox (90 percent of those eligible went to the polls). Happily, Olmert is no brute, and his cohorts are more interested in keeping advertisements with bikini-clad girls off bus shelters than in antagonizing the Arab

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sector. But the new mayor's debt to the obscurantist rabbis is still tangible, and how recklessly he pays that debt will be the measure of his mayoralty. Precisely because Jerusalem is the Holy City, Kollek made sure to run it as a modern and tolerant jurisdiction. And that was also because he is a thoroughly modern and tolerant man. He'll be missed. •

MOGADISHU POSTCARD

LONE RANGERS

By Joshua Hammer

"The lights just went out in the hospital," says Sgt. Richard Knight, who is staring anxiously through night-vision goggles into the heart of Mohamed Farah Aideed's territory in south Mogadishu. Charlie Company's third platoon is pulling rooftop guard duty on the perimeter of the U.N. compound on a sultry October evening. Five young specialists squat behind a pile of sandbags, training the telescopic sights of their M-16s on the deserted streets below.

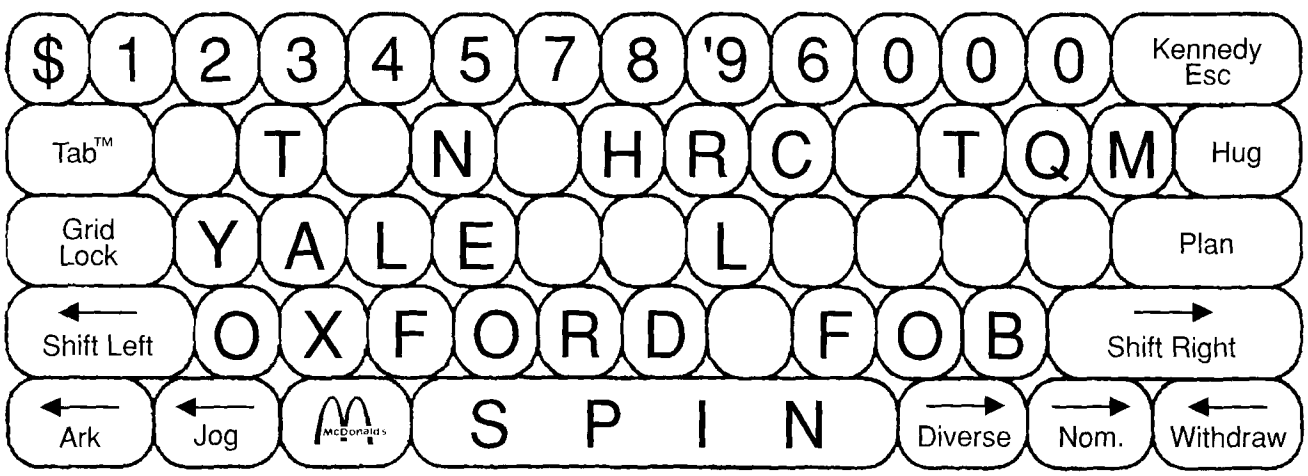
"Why the fuck did the lights go out?"

As I peer through the goggles, Mogadishu looks like a creepy Emerald City, a ghost town filled with invisible enemies. I scan the horizon, zeroing in on the Digfer hospital, used as a stronghold by Aideed's militiamen. Then Knight points out a bullet-pocked white villa 370 meters distant that the platoon calls "The Penthouse." Snipers used the building to fire rocket-propelled grenades and machine-guns at U.N. troops nearly every night for two months. The shooting has stopped since Aideed's cease-fire, but the troops don't expect the calm to last. "You can't relax," says staff specialist Michael Stout. "Sammy is just waiting for that."

Knight's platoon (part of the U.S. 10th Mountain Division's "Quick Reaction Force") has been in Mogadishu since August, long enough to develop an abiding hatred for the Somalis they ostensibly came here to protect. In two months, they've been shot at countless times and engaged in three major firefights—including the catastrophic Olympic Hotel battle on October 3 in which two members of the platoon were seriously wounded. During the three days I spent with Knight's platoon in October—a frenzied period that saw the release of American POW Michael Durant and movement toward a political solution to the guerilla war and U.S. disengagement—the troops' mood shifted rapidly from anger to elation to uncertainty. In many ways they are emblematic of the 2,000 American soldiers still stuck in the Somali quagmire: they wait, cursing both the Somali National Alliance and Bill Clinton, hoping for revenge while praying for quick escape from a botched mission.

The platoon consists of twenty-eight men, a classic ethnic stew that includes Mexican-, African- and Vietnamese-Americans. Most are between 19 and 21 years old. They live in a former classroom building at Mogadishu's university, adjacent to U.N. headquarters. "When we moved here in August it was just an empty shell," says Spc. Matt Weber. Now they've broken the space into six rooms, sandbagged the windows, constructed wood lofts, installed a Nautilus machine and hung up framed Norman Rockwell jigsaw puzzles and inspirational military mottos. Above the door to Knight's quarters is a big red-lettered sign that says, "IF I LEAD . . .

THE CLINTON KEYBOARD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DOUGLAS COUPLAND

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Welfare Warlords

Where are Somalia's warlords getting the money to finance their war against the United Nations and each other? Try the Canadian welfare system.

Hundreds of Somali refugees in Canada, it seems, have been running a welfare scam—establishing multiple welfare claims under different names and sending a portion of the government windfall to the warlord of their choice.

According to an internal document of Canada's Employment and Immigration Department leaked to reporters late last month, the Somalis are "systematically pillaging our vulnerable and exposed social welfare systems in an attempt to raise funds to support interests in the struggle for power in Somalia." The fraud could total "tens of millions of dollars annually" and poses a threat to Canada's "internal security." The movement, the report concludes, is "clan-driven, financially motivated and international in nature." This should come as no surprise. As Abdulgadir Omar, vice president of the Toronto-based Somali Immigrant Aid Organization, puts it: "In Somalia, heroism depends on how strongly you stand up for your clan.... All the warlords have their representatives in Canada."

Asked why Somali refugees would come to Canada rather than to the United States, a former immigration investigator who resigned in April and spoke only on the condition of anonymity answered: "You can't buy arms in Mogadishu with food stamps." He has a point. For starters, it's not too hard to become a refugee in Canada. The country admits any person who arrives at a port of entry and asks to make a refugee claim. The number of claimants is so high (37,720 last year) that it takes at least six months for each one to be processed. A person whose claim is rejected has the right of appeal, which often takes a year or more to be heard.

Moreover, Canada is a land of bounty. Refugee claimants receive cash welfare and full medical coverage. Payments range from about 500 Canadian dollars a month for a single person to $1,800 a month for a single mother with four children. And it's fairly easy to bilk the system. Welfare in Canada is paid by provincial governments, not the federal government. If you file claims under different names in different provinces, there's an even chance you won't be found out. No wonder 3,200 Somalis filed refugee claims in Canada last year, compared with 155 Somalis who made claims in the United States.

The Somali population in Canada is estimated to be between 60,000 and 70,000, with the largest group—about 35,000—in metropolitan Toronto. The remaining 35,000 live primarily in Montreal, Ottawa, Edmonton and Vancouver. Of the total, some 85 percent to 95 percent are on welfare, according to Somali community associations and the immigration department.

The former immigration investigator, along with a senior immigration officer, who also insisted on anonymity, estimate that an average of two claims are made per person on welfare. That's based on the belief that while some individuals have only the one legal claim, others have five or more. In Canada last year one Somali who lived in the United States and commuted to Ottawa to collect welfare was convicted of fraud totaling $6,500—or ten claims—a month. However, immigration investigators suspected he was actually using nineteen different names to collect as much as $12,000 a month.

He wasn't the only one. According to the internal report, Canadian immigration officers monitored the border crossings of 120 U.S. residents of Somali origin from July 1992 to March 1993. In the nine-month period, the vast majority of those tracked claimed to be visiting family or friends in Ottawa or Toronto for short periods every month. With few exceptions, the visits coincided with the period "when welfare checks are issued."

A good part of the money goes for the weapons that often wind up pointed at soldiers serving in the U.N.-sponsored peacekeeping force. According to the leaked immigration document, Somali clans have a practice called *qaaran*, that requires all members to "contribute according to their income" in times of crisis. In Canada there are money collectors in each city, and the funds are used to "purchase weapons."

In an interview with a Canadian reporter last summer, Osman Ato, an arms dealer for warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed, was quoted as saying that Somalis abroad provide millions of dollars for Aideed: "They are part and parcel of our struggle," he said. Each member of Aideed's "community has to donate a third of his income and in some situations half." Says one former Mogadishu physics teacher now living in Toronto: a man needs several welfare checks so that "he can chew *khat* all night and send money to the warlords."

Aideed's links to Canada could not be closer. His wife, four young kids, two adult children (from a previous marriage; his first wife now lives in California) and at least one grandchild all live in London, Ontario. And they are all on public assistance.

Khadiga Gurhan, Aideed's 35-year-old second wife, told me that although she's officially a refugee, she went to Somalia in 1991 to visit her husband, became pregnant again and returned to Toronto to have her fourth child. Last month, Canada's Public Security Department began investigating the status of Ms. Gurhan, who lives in a nice three-bedroom apartment.

Aideed's family is not alone in getting Canadian sanctuary. Relatives and cronies of the country's deposed ruler, Mohamed Siad Barre, have found their way north, too. The dictator's son, Ali Mohammed Siad, has had his claim turned down on the grounds of crimes against humanity. Not surprisingly, he's still in Canada appealing that decision.

The final twist in the story is a claim that senior Canadian government officials knew about the welfare-for-weapons scam and tried to cover it up. "In my four years with government I've never seen them move so fast to put the lid on," says the former immigration official. "It was an election year and I think it was embarrassing to the government for the public to know the sort of people we're bringing in." Due to the transition between governments, the story has so far received no official comment.

MOIRA FARROW

Moira Farrow is a reporter for *The Vancouver Sun*.

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FOLLOW ME. IF I RETREAT . . . SHOOT ME. IF I DIE . . . AVENGE ME." A satellite dish on the roof brings them Armed Forces Television Mogadishu, including the World Series (carried live in the middle of the night). And there's Armed Forces Radio ("Rockin' you from Mombasa to Mogadishu"). The week I was there the station played hourly messages to Michael Durant with some of his favorite songs, including the Eagles' "Take it Easy" and Willie Nelson's "Whiskey River."

Most of the time they're hunkered down inside the compound—watching T.V., working out, playing cards, biding time. When they venture out on the streets it's usually to train at the target range in an arid wasteland miles from Aideed's territory. They travel by Humvees and five-ton trucks (the same vehicles ambushed on October 3), with big M-60 machine-guns mounted on each vehicle. Six times during the past two months they've been called out for "quick reaction" duty.

They were on just such a mission September 25, the worst day in the platoon's history. Before dawn, the platoon rolled out of the U.N. compound to rescue survivors and retrieve bodies from the first U.S. Army Black Hawk shot down over Mogadishu—in the heart of the anti-U.N. stronghold the troops call "The Devil's Triangle." Knight was at the rear as they moved up a sandy alley. Fifteen yards ahead of him, Sgt. Christoper Reid, 24, was standing beside a building when a grenade detonated inches away from him. The explosion ignited the propellant in Reid's anti-tank gun, blowing off his arm and his leg and blinding him. "Decker was next to him, screaming, 'Reid's dead! Reid's dead!' " Knight recalls. "He was hysterical—I slapped him across the face and said, 'Let's get him!' The second explosion had cauterized his arm wound, and his leg was hanging in there by a thread. He just lay there saying, 'I'm hurt, I'm hurt. Help me.' I had Purchase and Decker load him into a Humvee, the medic showed up and applied tourniquets and we got him into a chopper. From the moment of detonation to the field hospital took seven and a half minutes. We saved him, but we never got the guy who fired the rocket."

Knight is 38 years old, an intense and physically powerful Michigan native who has been in the Army for fourteen years, including a five-year tour with the elite Ranger force in the early 1980s and four years as an instructor at The Citadel. Before coming to Somalia, he fought in Grenada and in the Persian Gulf. His laconic-macho style of speaking echoes popular Vietnam films, from *Apocalypse Now* to *Platoon*. He calls the sound of his M-60 heavy machine-gun "poetry in motion." The Somali fighters are "Sammies" ("for a few days after October 3 we were calling 'em 'Samuels' as a mark of respect," he says), and Knight has a variety of phrases for what he'd like to do to them, including "smoke 'em," "waste 'em" and "wax 'em."

But the main feeling you get talking to Knight and his men is contempt for the "pols" who dragged them into his mess without understanding what they were up against. "This was *no police action*. It was fucking war," Knight says, sitting on his bunk in a tiny room whose only decorative touches are a framed photo of his blond wife, a Detroit Tigers baseball cap and a map of Mogadishu. "These guys have been fighting a civil war and they are survivors. They know their business," Knight says. "The veterans will organize a militia of kids, arm them and tell them what they want done. I've returned fire on kids 10, 11, 12 years old. I've got no fucking choice." On the night of October 3, Knight says, his platoon made two attempts to rescue the seventy-five Rangers trapped around the Olympic Hotel. The second time, they got within five blocks of one downed chopper when they were pinned by a barrage of gunfire. "The Cobras waxed a few buildings, and out of one comes this kid about 10 years old, carrying an AK-47 and RPG," says Knight. "I waxed him. It was like pop-pop, he's gone."

Knight and the platoon say they're glad the shooting is mostly over—for now—but you can't help getting the feeling that some are still spoiling for a fight. "Right now Sammy's backed off a bit. Hopefully we'll let the pols fix it, but if they can't we'll go back in," says Stout, perched on the roof at the U.N. compound perimeter. And if Aideed's men shoot down another U.S. chopper? This time, Knight says, they'll be ready. "The army should send in F4 Tomcats with gas to suffocate the bastards, then a mechanized unit with us behind mopping up," he says. "We'll take care of Sammy. We're the best fucking light infantry division there is."

JOSHUA HAMMER is *Newsweek*'s Nairobi bureau chief.

ON THE HILL

COOPERMAN

By Jacob Weisberg

Listen to Jim Cooper, or one of the other conservative Democrats who support the Tennessee Congressman's health care reform bill, and you may begin to feel a sense of déjà vu. The moderates are restless again. Bill Clinton, they complain, more in sorrow than in anger, has betrayed their common faith, has violated what they *thought* were his New Democratic principles. Under the guise of "managed competition," they contend, the president, his wife and Ira Magaziner have put forth a bureaucratic, statist reform of American health care. They counseled moderation and market incentives. But since Clinton ignored their advice, they had no alternative but to join forces against him, and come up with their own plan.

The Democratic faction dissenting on health care is largely contiguous with the one that broke with Clinton during the budget fight last spring. The key Senate figures are John Breaux and Sam Nunn (with David Boren

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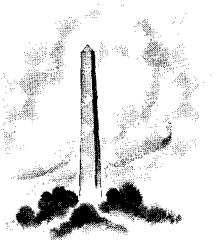
and Bob Kerrey making sympathetic noises in the background). In the House, Dave McCurdy and Charles Stenholm, along with Cooper, speak for members of the Conservative Democratic Forum and the Mainstream Forum. As with the budget crisis, it is impossible to separate the group's political motives from its disinterested ones. Last time, oil patch legislators articulating parochial objections to the energy tax merged with dedicated deficit hawks. This time, Cooper, whom White House operatives accuse of running for the Senate on the strength of his middle-of-the-road proposal, is also a serious student of the problem with a viable alternative.

The political situation, however, is different this time around. Once again, the White House seems far more exercised about dissidents in its own party than about strident Republican opponents. But this is not merely the narcissism of small differences. Last time, the rebels were an inchoate group with a variety of complaints. This time, they're a bipartisan coalition with fifty co-sponsors in the House. Last time, the White House strategy was to steamroll enough votes to pass Clinton's budget by a nose. This time, the president recognizes that compromise is the only option.



Cooper is an unlikely rebel. The scion of a Tennessee political family (his father was governor, and ran against Al Gore's father for the Senate in 1958), he has followed in Gore's footsteps. He was elected to Gore's House seat when Gore moved to the Senate, and is now running for Gore's old Senate seat. A Rhodes Scholar who sounds and looks like Mister Rogers, Cooper conceals his political ambition behind the facade of a diligent policy wonk. "I'm not exactly a hell-raiser," he says with characteristic understatement.

Cooper was first drawn into the health care debate in 1989, when Atul Gawande, a former staffer, directed him to ideas developed by the Jackson Hole Group, an ongoing health care seminar based in Wyoming that is credited with devising "managed competition." (Gawande went on to help sell Clinton on the idea during the 1992 campaign.) Cooper first sponsored a managed competition bill in 1990, and reintroduced it in 1992. Early this year, he says, he saw indications that the administration was deviating from this approach. In June, Cooper told Magaziner and Hillary Rodham Clinton that he thought their plans for an employer mandate, price controls and heavy regulation violated the Jackson Hole principles, and that he would have to introduce his own rival bill.

Through the summer, Cooper worked to line up support for his alternative. Most of the Democrats he pursued were lobbied by the White House as well. McCurdy, for instance, says White House Chief of Staff Mack McLarty asked him to co-sponsor Clinton's bill. McCurdy says he declined because of objections to the employer mandate and questions about cost, and joined Cooper instead. The moderate Democrats then linked up with a group of liberal Republicans led by Fred Grandy (a.k.a. "Gopher," from "The Love Boat"). These House Republicans agreed to acknowledge the need for what they euphemistically call "revenues." This meant accepting Cooper's idea of a "tax cap," which would limit the deductibility of employer-provided health insurance to a basic benefits package. In exchange, the moderate Democrats agreed to allow more companies to opt out of health care alliances.

Cooper says you can literally measure how much less bureaucratic his plan is: 300 pages to Clinton's 1,300. That is a considerable advantage. But the plan has one major failing: it doesn't provide universal coverage. Instead, it offers what the Cooperites term "universal access." Insurance companies wouldn't be able to turn down people with pre-existing medical conditions, and the poor would receive government subsidies according to a sliding scale. Even with the subsidies, however, some millions of people would go uncovered. In an October 31 appearance on "Meet the Press," Cooper argued for postponing the question of how to cover the remaining uninsured. But if universal coverage is one of his eventual goals, a major tax increase would be needed to pay for it. Only after factoring that in can he honestly compare the costs of his plan to the White House's. And if he universalizes coverage with direct subsidies rather than mandates, his plan will cost more than Clinton's.

The lack of an employer mandate is, however, a powerful political advantage, and the White House was slow to recognize the threat. Not until September 23 did Hillary Clinton meet with Cooper and Breaux, the primary sponsor of the Senate version of the bill, to try to talk them into joining forces with her. Two days later, Cooper spent eight hours with the president when the two played golf together in Washington. When it became clear that Cooper was immovable, the White House turned to lobbying potential co-sponsors, in part through congressional heavies such as John Dingell. The White House prevailed upon Representative Dick Swett of New Hampshire, who co-sponsored the previous version of Cooper's bill but withdrew this time around. They failed, however, in the case of Senator Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut. Despite a half-hour conversation with Clinton on the evening of October 20, Lieberman appeared with Breaux, Nunn and Senate Republican co-sponsor Dave Durenberger at their press conference the next day.

Curiously, after the nearly identical House and Senate versions were introduced, the White House was conciliatory toward Breaux's plan, while sniping at Cooper's. White House officials, including economic policy adviser Robert Rubin, health care adviser Judith Feder and spokesman Kevin Anderson, called Tennessee reporters to trash the Cooper plan. Former Ohio Governor Richard Celeste, who is running the Democratic National Committee's health care lobbying effort, blasted Cooper's plan—and only Cooper's plan—at a recent DNC meeting.

"We don't respond well to threats or intimidation," Cooper says. He knows the attacks have been pretty mild stuff. He's just doing what any Democratic candidate in a conservative state would do: making the most of them.

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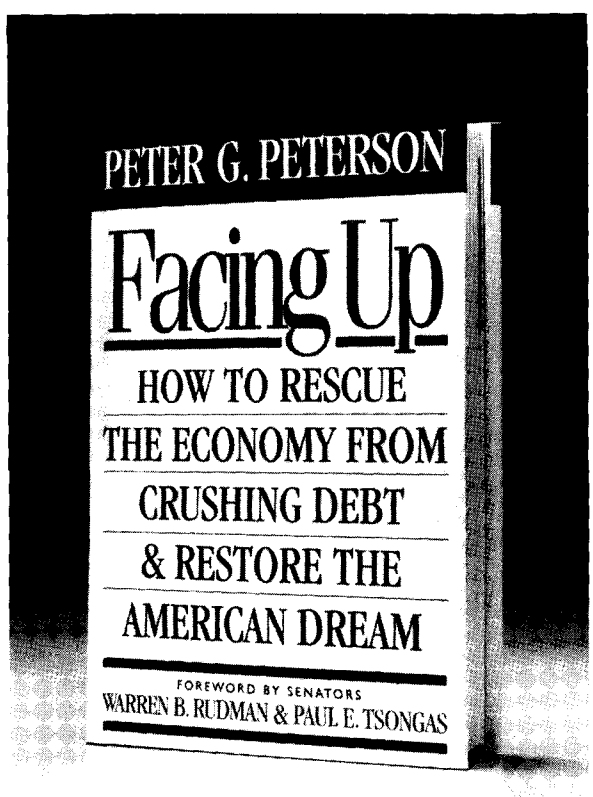
PETER G. PETERSON
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SIMON & SCHUSTER

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As Senator Richard Shelby of Alabama and a few others have discovered, antagonizing the White House can be downright helpful. "The more they beat up on Cooper, the more they help him," says Grandy. Clintonites concede on background that the assault on Cooper was ham-fisted. "It was not elegantly done," says one White House official. The White House might bully Cooper more elegantly by threatening to send Hillary and Ira to campaign for him.

The White House's more generous response to Breaux has been partly a matter of courtesy. Breaux says he realized a long time ago that he was not going to be able to support what he calls a "gumbo approach to health care—a little managed competition, a little single-payer." But he went out of his way to be deferential, delaying introduction of his bill until after Hillary Clinton had testified on behalf of hers. He was also less forceful in his criticism of the Clinton plan than Cooper was. But the lack of return fire is also a reflection of the president being less worried about the Senate than about the House. In the Senate, Breaux's allies are outnumbered by liberal Republicans, twenty-three of whom have signed on to a bill sponsored by John Chafee of Rhode Island. His bill shares Clinton's objective of universal coverage, but attains it through an individual, rather than an employer mandate.

If the White House cuts a deal with liberal Republicans in the Senate, it doesn't have to worry about a few errant Democratic moderates. In the House, however, there is no bill corresponding to Chafee's; the liberal Republicans are with Grandy and Cooper. What's more, Cooper and Grandy are negotiating with Chafee; talks began last week. If the two centrist factions conclude a separate peace, Clinton could be in serious trouble. "The votes aren't there if Cooper carries a lot of conservative Democrats and some of the moderate Republicans," says one Clinton health care adviser.

One sign of Clinton's loss of the center on health care is the defection of the Democratic Leadership Council. As another White House health care official acknowledges, Clinton was tardy in wooing the group. In early October Clinton called DLC president Al From to make sure the council was supporting universal coverage, which it was. But by that time, the DLC, whose chairman is Breaux, had all but endorsed the Cooper plan. "Obviously, they would like to have had us on their plan," From says of the White House. The DLC's actual position is part Cooper and part Clinton. The group likes Cooper's less bureaucratic approach; it doesn't believe the government should create a new entitlement to health care. But it supports getting everybody covered, which, as From points out, is nearly impossible without some form of mandate.

Another man in the middle is Gawande, an architect of both plans. He says he favors Clinton's over Cooper's, but urges compromise. "I prefer the Clinton bill because it provides universal coverage," he says. "But I think common ground can, and must, be found between the two." Once it is, Clinton will have to make it appear that Jim Cooper gave in to him, and not the other way around. •

A federal nonsolution.

RAPE AND DENIAL

By Alice Vachss

Last June the Senate Judiciary Committee released "Violence Against Women: The Response to Rape: Detours on the Road to Equal Justice." The report, which documented the failure of state and local governments to adequately investigate, prosecute and penalize sexual assaults, was meant to serve as a stalking horse for the Democrats' Violence Against Women Act. In fact, few of the problems identified by the report would be solved by the act.

Virtually all sex crimes fall under the jurisdiction of state and local law enforcement. The Violence Against Women Act seems to ignore this basic fact, for it is built around a civil rights provision, which might make sexual violence a violation of federal civil rights law. The act does nothing about local laws or local practices, and it is not "model" legislation that could be copied by the states. If passed—and it is expected to sail through Congress early next year—its net effect will be to lavish enormous sums of federal money on the same institutions and agencies at state and local levels whose failure to perform is documented so clearly.

I spent ten years as a sex-crimes prosecutor in New York City, first as a trial attorney and then as chief of the sex-crimes unit. During that time I saw my share of rapists freed by bad laws. More often, however, I saw rapists freed by prosecutors unwilling even to step into the ring. Paradoxically, this sad fact was borne out by the Judiciary Committee's report, which concluded that most *reported* rapes do not result in arrest. Among those rapists actually arrested, few are vigorously prosecuted. And of that (much smaller) number, even fewer are subjected to significant incarceration.

According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports, 102,555 rapes were reported to the police in the United States in 1990, the last year for which statistics are available. Only 39,160 of these reports resulted in arrest. The "Detours" study does the math for us: "62 percent of the reported rape cases never result in the apprehension of an individual for the crime." Again, according to the FBI, only 18,024 of these arrested cases result in conviction. This amounts to an arrest-to-conviction rate of less than 49 percent and a report-to-conviction rate of less than 18 percent. "A rape case is more than twice as likely to be dismissed as a murder case ... [and] nearly 40 percent more likely

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to be dismissed than a robbery," the report says.

The Senate Judiciary Committee collected additional data from state criminal justice agencies. A ten-state summary showed that 54 percent of the arrests in forcible rape cases resulted in dismissals or acquittals. Because there is a vast difference—both criminological and psychological—between dismissal (prior to trial) and acquittal (a "not guilty" verdict), a follow-up eight-state outcome chart is highly illuminating. Of all rape prosecutions that fail to result in a conviction, 89 percent are the result of dismissals, 7 percent come from acquittals and 4 percent are attributable to "other."

The "Detours" report concedes that its figures do not match Bureau of Justice statistics to "rates of prosecution." The BOJ statistics cite local law enforcement's collective claim that it prosecutes 77 percent of all rape cases that result in arrest. But, according to "Detours," the bureau footnotes a warning that these rates include *all* prosecutions regardless of how minimal the charge. The distinction is not semantic. In New York state, for example, prosecutors have discretion to charge the same sexual assault as either "rape in the first degree," a major felony requiring mandatory imprisonment and punishable by a maximum of twenty-five years, or "sexual misconduct," a misdemeanor permitting probation as a sentencing option and punishable by a maximum of one year in jail.

Convicted rapists can also expect extraordinarily lenient treatment within state criminal justice systems. An eighteen-state chart of sentences for those convicted of forcible rape shows that 21 percent receive probation. But even the remaining 76 percent (some 3 percent of all dispositions are listed as "other") do not necessarily translate to substantial imprisonment. A nine-state chart reveals that 32 percent of "incarcerated" rapists receive jail (not prison) sentences. Jail sentences include so-called "shock probation" (minimal jail time followed by probation) as well as sentences of less than one year. Whether it is the sentencing judge after trial or the prosecutor (or both in collaboration) on a plea, someone is giving away the courthouse to 45 percent of the convicted rapists in this country.

It is difficult to remember, reading these statistics, that they are meant to support legislation that would finance prosecutors—the people responsible for the current state of affairs. Behind the numbers there looms a frightening reality. Prosecutors have virtually unfettered discretion to pick and choose the cases that go to court. What is most dangerous about that discretion is that it is exercised in the dark, often by minimally trained law graduates, with few systems in place to protect against bias or stupidity. The public gets to see only those cases that *are* prosecuted, not those that fall through the cracks.

That sex crimes are underprosecuted is not news. Historically, the laws governing their prosecution were so restrictive that few cases could meet legal criteria. For example, until about twenty years ago New York state required "corroboration" of even a competent adult sex crimes victim's testimony—thus virtually eliminating most prosecutions, particularly those in which the victim knew the perpetrator. But despite the advent of improved legislation, the underprosecution of sex crimes continues: no longer tactically impossible, underprosecution has become a law enforcement *choice.*

Why would police and prosecutors shun so many sex crimes? Prejudice is one answer. Many victims fail to meet (undisclosed, unacknowledged and always denied) law enforcement standards for behavior, background or ethnicity. Typically such "discretion" only comes to light when its beneficiary commits a new and even more shocking offense. One burglary-rape victim told me the defendant was allowed to plead guilty to a misdemeanor and a few months jail time because, the prosecutor told her, "You're known to have dated black men." Shortly after his release, the defendant graduated to sex-murder. But more important is self-interest. Statistics are as critical to law enforcement leadership as they are to baseball franchises. Prosecutors run for re-election on their conviction rates. And conviction rates do not include those cases "weeded out" of the system.

Those whose life experiences are limited to long-distance observations take the low prosecution rate of sexual offenses as proof of "rape hype." Despite more than 100,000 reported rape cases a year, they attribute fear of rape to feminist "hysteria," reasoning that if so (relatively) few cases are actually prosecuted, they simply don't exist. The rest of us are not so blind. We know that the level of sexual violence in this country is impermissibly high, with no reduction strategy in place.

If we want a Violence Against Women Act, and are willing to spend the $2.3 billion it calls for, then we should enact legislation that will work. Let Congress review effective state laws and devise a model penal code for sexual assault. Have them build into it a requirement that prosecutors give written reasons, co-signed by the elected district or states attorney, whenever a complaint of sexual assault is declined. Require each state to adopt the model *before* it is eligible for financing. Let the federal government do its share by creating criminal computer banks: the public should have access to information on convicted pedophiles; law enforcement should be able to obtain countrywide data on serial rapists.

Even without new legislation or megabudgets, we can fight the problem outlined in the "Detours" report. A good place to start would be by conditioning the re-election of our law enforcement leaders on more substantive criteria than win/loss records.

ALICE VACHSS is the author of *Sex Crimes: Ten Years on the Front Lines Prosecuting Rapists and Confronting Their Collaborators* (Random House).

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DO HEALTH CARE COSTS MATTER?

By William J. Baumol

The exploding cost of health care is clearly a matter of concern across the industrialized world. In the United States the president has stressed this issue as one of the most critical facing us, arguing that soaring health care costs not only drain the economy, but price good health out of the reach of many Americans. The issue, it is important to note, is not just absolute levels of health care costs, but the *rate* at which they're rising and the growing share of the national economy they occupy. The reasons cited for this are many—from the greed of drug and insurance companies to an increasingly aged population. But there's also something else at work here: a deep economic force that suggests the relative increase in health care costs compared with the rest of the economy is an inevitable and ineradicable part of a developed economy. The attempt to do anything about it may be as foolhardy as it is impossible.

But first some facts. The relative rate of growth of health care costs is indisputable. From 1948 to 1992 the price of a doctor's services increased more than 5.5 percent a year, compared with an average annual increase of 4 percent in the Consumer Price Index. This gap may not seem very large for any one year, but over the forty-four years in question it means that the price of a doctor's services increased by more than 100 percent in real terms. In the same period, the price of a hospital room grew even more rapidly: by 700 percent in real terms.

In America the phenomenon has been worse than in other countries, but there is no other advanced country in which complaints about rates of cost increase are not heard. According to the latest Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development medical-consumption price index, in fourteen of eighteen countries in the years 1960 through 1990, health care prices rose more rapidly than prices in general. The U.S. rate of increase was exceeded by that in seven countries—Australia, Austria, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland. Although in recent years the growth rate of U.S. costs has accelerated relative to that of the other leading economies (and the proportion of health spending here is still higher than in other countries), the universality and persistence of the problem suggest it lies deeper than the particular administrative or institutional arrangements adopted in any single country.

What, then, can its source be? There are many influences, actual or alleged. Lawsuits against doctors, lack of competitiveness in the profession and high earnings of physicians clearly help explain the *levels* of those costs. But I am aware of no source besides the one about to be described that seems to account for the many countries in which *growth* in health costs persistently outpaces the rate of inflation.

If litigation could explain the rise in medical costs, it, and the size of jury awards, would have to have been increasing throughout the last few decades. I know of no evidence that this was so, or that it was so in the other countries in which costs have been rising faster than ours. Recent evidence even seems to suggest that the pertinent litigation in the United States has been leveling off or declining. There has been no discernible trend in the size of jury awards, but the frequency of plaintiff victories has been declining, meaning that the total cost of malpractice awards has also probably been falling.

Similarly, if lack of competitiveness were the problem, the degree of competitiveness would have to have been falling over the years. The evidence, however, is to the contrary. The rapid growth in the number and membership of HMOs has added to the forces of competition. The number of physicians per capita has been expanding since 1960 and, with that, the pressures for doctors to compete for patients. Moreover, the proportion of applicants to medical school who are granted admission and the proportion of medical students who graduate have also grown. The other alleged cause of the relative rise of health care costs—doctors' incomes—also doesn't seem to explain much. Over the past fifteen years, the real earnings of doctors in the United States have been virtually constant. The 1991 *U.S. Statistical Abstract* reports the trends in median net physician incomes for the period 1975-1988. In 1988 real average physician income was somewhat less than

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where it had begun, at $53,600 in 1975 dollars.

Where, then, does that leave us? It is almost exactly a quarter-century since William Bowen and I first reported our analysis of what is now called "the cost disease of the personal services," including health care, education and a number of other services. A major source of the cost disease, we argued, was the different productivity growth rates of the various parts of a developed economy. Put simply, we noted that some parts of the economy—what we called the "stagnant services"—experienced consistently lower productivity growth rates than other sectors did. These services—notably health care, education, law, welfare programs, mail, police, sanitation, repairs, the performing arts and restaurant services—all had in common the handicraft attribute of their supply processes. None of them had been fully liberated from the requirement of a large residue of personal attention by their producers. Not that the growth rate of their labor productivity had been zero. In almost every case there was some productivity gain with the passage of time; but in the long run, it was far slower than the rate of productivity increase in the economy as a whole.

There are at least two reasons why this is so. First, these services are inherently resistant to automation. The manufacture of thousands of identical cars can be carried out on an assembly line, but the repair of a car just hauled to a garage from the site of an accident can not be entrusted completely to automated processes. Second, in many of these services, quality is, or is at least believed to be, inescapably correlated with the amount of labor expended on their production. Doctors who speed up the examination of their patients, or police forces that spend less time on the beat, are held to be shortchanging those they serve. This has a real effect on the relative share of GNP and relative sector labor costs that exist in an advanced economy.

To see why, imagine an economy divided into two sectors: one, the progressive sector, in which productivity is rising, and another, the stagnant sector, in which productivity is constant. Suppose the first economic sector produces cars, and the second, performances of Mozart quartets. Assume that in car production, where technological improvements are possible, output per work-hour is increasing at an annual rate of 4 percent, while the productivity of quartet players remains unchanged year after year. Imagine now that the workers in the car industry recognize the growth in their own productivity and persuade management to agree to a matching rise in wages. The effect on the auto industry is easy to trace. Each year the average worker's wages go up by 4 percent, but her output increases by exactly the same percentage. Then the one effect on cost is exactly offset by the other—total cost and output both rise 4 percent. So labor cost *per unit* (the ratio between total labor cost and total output) remains absolutely unchanged. This process can continue indefinitely in our imaginary world, with auto workers earning more and more each year, with cost per car remaining stationary, and with no rise in car prices necessary to maintain company profits.

But what of the other industry in our little economy? How is quartet performance faring in this society of growing abundance? Suppose that the quartet players somehow succeed in getting their wages raised, and that their standard of living, though below that of the auto workers, maintains its relative position, also increasing 4 percent per year. What does this situation imply for the costs of quartet performance? If the earnings of string players increase by 4 percent per year while their productivity remains unchanged, it follows that the direct labor cost per unit of their output must also rise at 4 percent, since cost per unit is equal to total cost divided by the number of units of output. If in a forty-hour week the string player provides just as many performances as he did the previous year but his wage is 4 percent higher, then the cost per performance must have risen correspondingly. Moreover, there is nothing in the nature of this situation to prevent the cost of performance from rising indefinitely and at a compounded rate. So long as the musicians are successful in resisting erosion of their relative incomes, the cost per performance must continue to increase along with the performers' income. Cumulatively rising costs will beset the performing arts with absolute inevitability.

It is important to recognize that ordinary price inflation plays no role in the logic of our analysis. That is, as long as the wages of musicians in this two-sector economy continue to increase at all, the cost of a live performance will rise, cumulatively and persistently, relative to the cost of a car, whether or not the general price level in the economy is changing; the extent of the increase in the relative cost of the performance will depend directly on the relative rate of growth of productivity in the car industry. Moreover, though it is always tempting to seek some villain to explain such a run of real price increases, there is no guilty party here. Neither wasteful expenditure nor greed plays any role. It is the relatively stagnant technology of live musical performance—its inherent resistance to productivity improvements—that accounts for the compounding rise in the cost of performance of quartets.

It's clear how this analysis applies to the relatively increasing cost of health care. Clearly, health care has taken giant steps in quality improvement over the decades, but while the amount of physician time spent per patient visit or per illness may have declined somewhat, it has done so only marginally. Even the most elaborate technology needs to be applied patient-by-patient in a painstakingly labor-intensive fashion. The upshot is that this service must suffer from a rise in its cost that is terrifyingly rapid and frighteningly persistent. It threatens the strained budgets of individual families, as well as of central governments.

Is there a way out of this morass? The bad news is: unfortunately not. The good news is: on closer inspection, the morass is not as depressing as it first looks. In

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truth, the very structure of the problem is such as to offer society all the resources for its solution. We can afford ever more ample medical care, ever more abundant education, ever more adequate support of the indigent, and all this along with a growing abundance of private comforts and luxuries. This conclusion may sound implausible in light of all that has been said. But it's inescapable, if only our future productivity record bears any resemblance to that of decades past, which brought us ever better health care, despite rising costs. There are two fundamental reasons why this must be so.

The small, but positive, productivity growth rate in the stagnant services. In *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, Mark Twain devotes an entire chapter to Sir Boss's unsuccessful bid to explain the concept of real wages to his primitive hosts. He argues passionately that the monetary magnitudes of wages are irrelevant; that, regardless of their value as expressed in terms of money, wages are really higher only when it takes fewer hours of labor to earn the wages needed to purchase a given set of goods. Yet, precisely that is true of stagnant services. Their money prices are indeed rising ever higher, their exchange rate against manufactured goods constantly increasing. But in terms of the number of labor hours it takes to acquire them, over the longer run, their cost is decreasing steadily, if slowly. It is immediately obvious that the claim that we cannot afford them is simply a manifestation of what economists call "money illusion."

But how can that be? The answer is that even the most stagnant of services is undergoing some, albeit modest, productivity growth. The cost disease analysis does not claim otherwise; its workings merely require productivity in the stagnant services to grow much more slowly than that of the economy overall. To illustrate the point, let me return to my favorite example. If the hypothetical Mozart string quartet had been scored for a half-hour performance, then its performance in 1990 required two person-hours of labor, just as it did in 1790, when it might have been written. Thus, there is apparently no scope for the slightest increase in labor productivity. Yet that is only an illusion. Assume that the more recent performance was by a Viennese group of musicians, and that it was played in Frankfurt. A 1990 trip from their Austrian home base to the German auditorium surely would normally have taken no more than several hours. But when Mozart made the trip in 1790 it required six days of extreme discomfort. Certainly, technical progress has reduced the number of hours of labor required to provide a unit of the output in question, thus raising the labor productivity of every itinerant performer, even in live performance (and we know that performers are virtually all itinerant).

There is in fact no service whose productivity is untouched by technical progress to some degree. This rise in labor productivity means, by definition, that it requires ever less labor time to produce a unit of such a service. And every resulting reduction in labor time spent in producing the service means that those purchasing the service must expend that much less labor time to acquire the wherewithal needed to purchase it. That is the sense in which even education and medical care have really grown steadily cheaper (albeit at a snail's pace, compared to other outputs), even as they appear to become steadily more unaffordable. However, this, at best, can only make a minor contribution toward solving the politico-budgetary problems that stem from the cost disease. More powerful aid must come from a second source.

Productivity growth in the entire economy means we can afford more of everything. In an economy in which productivity is growing in almost every sector and declining in none, it is a tautology that consumers can have more of every good and service: they simply have to transfer some of the gains from the sector that's becoming much more productive into the sector that's becoming only a little more productive. Impossible? Imagine that the real price of health care continues to grow at its current rate for fifty years, and that overall U.S. productivity rises for that period at its historic rate of around 2 percent. In fifty years, the output of every good and service, including education and health care, can increase to more than 3.5 times its 1990 magnitude: an enormous increase in wealth for everyone. But the catch is: the relative composition of the sectors will be drastically different. Medical outlays, instead of constituting 12 percent of the total, as they did in 1990, must rise to more than 35 percent in 2040! And Bill Clinton thought he had a problem.

An analogy can perhaps make this clearer. Suppose we think of the public's consumption of goods and services as the purchase of a bundle containing many components, just as the purchase of a car includes the acquisition of seats, tire, steering wheel, etc. Imagine that the price of steering wheels is increasing at an impressive rate, but that because of the decline in the costs of the other components, cars (equipped with steering wheels) grow less expensive every year. Would one really conclude that steering wheels are growing unaffordable, even when their price grows to 65 percent of the price of the car?

Yes, this happy conclusion is just a bit simplistic. Making the stagnant services affordable for the poor will still be necessary. Managing a service sector of more than 50 percent of the economy will be a massive headache. So, too, will educating the public to understand the difference between the reality and the illusion in the behavior of costs. It will not be easy to convince the layperson that, even though prices of personal services appear to be rising at a phenomenal rate, in fact the costs of those services (in terms of their labor time equivalent) are really declining, because of increases in their labor productivity. But these are the real problems of our future economy. The share of GNP devoted to health care costs isn't one of them. •

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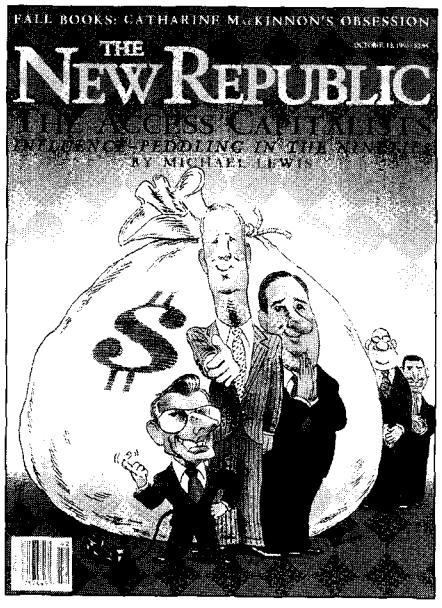

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DEFINING DEVIANCY UP

By Charles Krauthammer

I.

In a recent essay in *The American Scholar* titled "Defining Deviancy Down," Daniel Patrick Moynihan offers an arresting view of the epidemic of deviancy—of criminality, family breakdown, mental illness—that has come to characterize the American social landscape. Deviancy has reached such incomprehensible proportions, argues Moynihan, that we have had to adopt a singular form of denial: we deal with the epidemic simply by defining away most of the disease. We lower the threshold for what we are prepared to call normal in order to keep the volume of deviancy—redefined deviancy—within manageable proportions.

For example. Since 1960 the incidence of single parenthood has more than tripled. Almost 30 percent of all American children are now born to unmarried mothers. The association of fatherlessness with poverty, welfare dependency, crime and other pathologies points to a monstrous social problem. Yet, as the problem has grown, it has been systematically redefined by the culture—by social workers, intellectuals and most famously by the mass media—as simply another lifestyle choice. Dan Quayle may have been right, but Murphy Brown won the ratings war.

Moynihan's second example is crime. We have become totally inured to levels of criminality that would have been considered intolerable thirty years ago. The St. Valentine's Day massacre, which caused a national uproar and merited two entries in the *World Book Encyclopedia*, involved four thugs killing seven other thugs. An average weekend in today's Los Angeles, notes James Q. Wilson. More than half of all violent crimes are not even reported. We have come to view homicide as ineradicable a part of the social landscape as car accidents.

And finally there is mental illness. Unlike family breakdown and criminality, there has probably been no increase in mental illness over the last thirty years. Rates of schizophrenia do not change, but the rate of hospitalization for schizophrenia and other psychoses has changed. The mental hospitals have been emptied. In 1955 New York state asylums had 93,000 patients. Last year they had 11,000. Where have the remaining 82,000 and their descendants gone? Onto the streets mostly. In one generation, a flood of pathetically ill people has washed onto the streets of America's cities. We now step over these wretched and abandoned folk sleeping in doorways and freezing on grates. They, too, have become accepted as part of the natural landscape. We have managed to do that by redefining them as people who simply lack affordable housing. They are not crazy or sick, just very poor—as if anyone crazy and sick and totally abandoned would not end up very poor.

Moynihan's powerful point is that with the moral deregulation of the 1960s, we have had an explosion of deviancy in family life, criminal behavior and public displays of psychosis. And we have dealt with it in the only way possible: by redefining deviancy down so as to explain away and make "normal" what a more civilized, ordered and healthy society long ago would have labeled—and long ago did label—deviant.

II.

Moynihan is right. But it is only half the story. There is a complementary social phenomenon that goes with defining deviancy down. As part of the vast social project of moral leveling, it is not enough for the deviant to be normalized. The normal must be found to be deviant. Therefore, while for the criminals and the crazies deviancy has been defined down (the bar defining normality has been lowered), for the ordinary bourgeois deviancy has been defined up (the bar defining normality has been raised). Large areas of ordinary behavior hitherto considered benign have had their threshold radically redefined up, so that once innocent behavior now stands condemned as deviant. Normal middle-class life then stands exposed as the true home of violence and abuse and a whole catalog of aberrant acting and thinking.

As part of this project of moral leveling, entirely new areas of deviancy—such as date rape and politically incorrect speech—have been discovered. And old areas—such as child abuse—have been amplified by

This article is adapted from the author's Bradley Lecture at the American Enterprise Institute.

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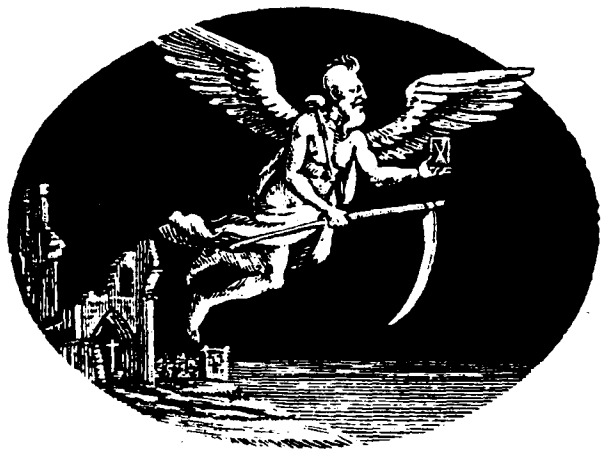
Are You Ready for The Angel of Death?



Our culture does its best to distract us from one brutal fact: We die. Perhaps you tune God out, but He's sitting up there in a corner, just waiting. Sooner or later we'll have to settle accounts. No consuming pleasure, earthly utopia, therapy, or opiate will spare us.

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endless reiteration in the public presses and validated by learned reports of their astonishing frequency. The net effect is to show that deviancy is not the province of criminals and crazies but thrives in the heart of the great middle class. The real deviants of society stand unmasked. Who are they? Not Bonnie and Clyde but Ozzie and Harriet. True, Ozzie and Harriet have long been the object of ridicule. Now, however, they are under indictment.

The moral deconstruction of middle-class normality is a vast project. Fortunately, thousands of volunteers are working the case. By defining deviancy up they have scored some notable successes. Three, in particular. And in precisely the areas Moynihan identified: family life, crime and thought disorders.

III.

First, family life. Under the new dispensation it turns out that the ordinary middle-class family is not a warm, welcoming fount of "family values," not a bedrock of social and psychic stability as claimed in conservative propaganda. It is instead a caldron of pathology, a teeming source of the depressions, alienations and assorted dysfunctions of adulthood. Why? Because deep in the family lies the worm, the 1990s version of original sin: child abuse.

Child abuse is both a crime and a tragedy, but is it nineteen times more prevalent today than it was thirty years ago? That is what the statistics offer. In 1963: 150,000 reported cases. In 1992: 2.9 million.

Now, simply considering the historical trajectory of the treatment of children since the nineteenth century, when child labor—even child slavery—was common, it is hard to believe that the tendency toward improved treatment of children has been so radically reversed in one generation.

Plainly it hasn't. What happened then? The first thing that happened was an epidemic of over-reporting. Douglas Besharov points out that whereas in 1975 about one-third of child abuse cases were dismissed for lack of evidence, today about two-thirds are dismissed. New York state authorities may have considered it a great social advance that between 1979 and 1983, for example, reported cases of child abuse increased by almost 50 percent. But over the same period, the number of substantiated cases actually declined. In other words, the 22,000 increase of reported cases yielded a net decrease of real cases.

Note the contrast. For ordinary crime, to which we have become desensitized, we have defined deviancy down. One measure of this desensitization is under-reporting: nearly two out of every three ordinary crimes are never even reported. Child abuse is precisely the opposite. For child abuse, to which we have become exquisitely oversensitized, deviancy has been correspondingly defined up. One of the measures of oversensitization is over-reporting: whereas two out of three ordinary crimes are never reported, two out of three reported cases of child abuse are never shown to have occurred.

The perceived epidemic of child abuse is a compound of many factors. Clearly, over-reporting is one. Changing societal standards regarding corporal punishment is another. But beyond the numbers and definitions there is a new ideology of child abuse. Under its influence, the helping professions, committed to a belief in endemic abuse, have encouraged a massive search to find cases, and where they cannot be found, to invent them.

Consider this advice from one of the more popular self-help books on sex abuse, *Courage to Heal.* "If you are unable to remember any specific instances [of childhood sex abuse] ... but still have a feeling that something abusive happened to you, it probably did." And "if you think you were abused and your life shows the symptoms, then you were."

If your life shows the symptoms. In a popular culture saturated with tales of child abuse paraded daily on the airwaves, it is not hard to suggest to vulnerable people that their problems—symptoms—are caused by long-ago abuse, indeed, even unremembered abuse. Hence the reductio ad absurdum of the search for the hidden epidemic: adults who present themselves suddenly as victims of child abuse after decades of supposed amnesia—the amnesia reversed and the memory reclaimed thanks to the magic of intensive psychotherapy.

Now, the power of therapeutic suggestion is well-known. Dr. George Ganaway of Emory University points out—and, as a retired psychiatrist, I well remember—how fiction disguised as memory can be created at the suggestion of a trusted therapist whom the patient wants to please.

Why should memories of child abuse please the therapist? Because it fits the new ideology of neurosis. For almost a century Freudian ideology located the source of adult neuroses in the perceived psychosexual traumas of childhood. But Freud concluded after initial skepticism that these psychosexual incidents were fantasy.

Today Freud's conclusion is seen either as a great error or, as Jeffrey Masson and other anti-Freudian crusaders insist, as a great betrayal of what he knew to be the truth. Today's fashion, promoted by a vanguard of therapists and researchers, is that the fantasies are true. When the patient presents with depression, low self-esteem or any of the common ailments of modern life, the search begins for the underlying childhood sexual abuse. "Some contemporary therapists," writes Elizabeth Loftus, professor of psychology at the University of Washington, "have been known to tell patients, on the basis of a suggestive history or 'symptom profile,' that they definitely had a traumatic experience. The therapist then urges the patient to pursue the recalcitrant memories."

This new psychology is rooted in and reinforces current notions about the pathology of ordinary family life. Rather than believing, as we did for a hundred years under the influence of Freud, that adult neurosis results from the inevitable psychological traumas of sexual maturation, compounded by parental error and crystal-

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lized in the (literally) fantastic memories of the patient, today there is a new dispensation. Nowadays neurosis is the outcome not of innocent errors but of criminal acts occurring in the very bosom of the ordinary-looking family. Seek and ye shall find: the sins of the fathers are visible in the miserable lives of the children. Child abuse is the crime waiting only to be discovered with, of course, the proper therapeutic guidance and bedtime reading. It is the dirty little secret behind the white picket fence. And beside this offense, such once-regarded deviancies of family life as illegitimacy appear benign.

IV.

So much for the family. Let us look now at a second pillar of everyday bourgeois life: the ordinary heterosexual relationship. A second vast category of human behavior that until recently was considered rather normal has had its threshold for normality redefined up so as to render much of it deviant. Again we start with a real offense: rape. It used to be understood as involving the use of or threat of force. No longer. It has now been expanded by the concept of date rape to encompass an enormous continent of behavior that had long been viewed as either normal or ill-mannered, but certainly not criminal.

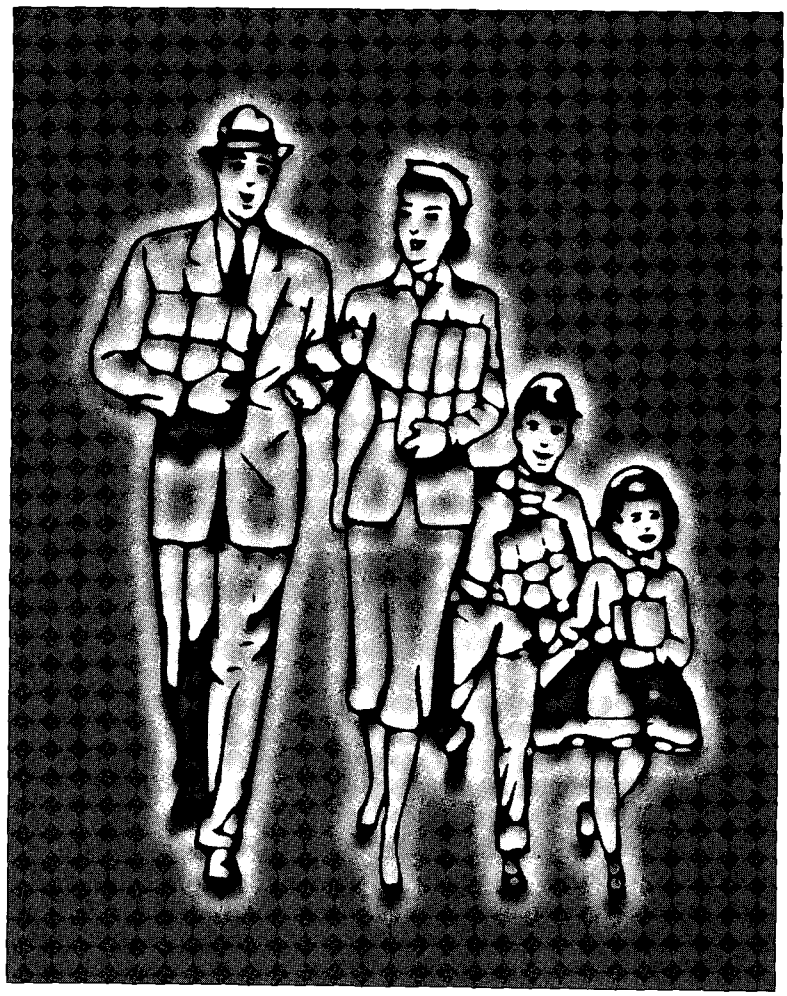

ILLUSTRATION BY ERIC BAKER FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

"Some 47 percent of women are victims of rape or attempted rape ... and 25 percent of women are victims of completed rape." So asserts Catharine MacKinnon on a national television news special. Assertions of this sort are commonplace. A Stanford survey, for example, claims that a third of its women have suffered date rape. The most famous and widely reported study of the rape epidemic is the one done by Mary Koss (and published, among other places, in *Ms.* magazine). Her survey of 6,159 college students found that 15 percent had been raped and another 12 percent subjected to attempted rape. She also reported that in a single year 3,187 college females reported 886 incidents of rape or attempted rape. That is more than one incident for every four women per year. At that rate, about three out of every four undergraduate women would be victims of rape or attempted rape by graduation day.

If those numbers sound high, they are. As Neil Gilbert points out in *The Public Interest*, the numbers compiled by the FBI under the Unified Crime Reporting Program and suitably multiplied to account for presumed unreported cases, yield an incidence of rape somewhere around one in a thousand. As for the college campus, reports from 2,400 campuses mandated by the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act of 1990 showed fewer than 1,000 rapes for 1991. That is about one-half a rape per campus per year. Barnard College, a hotbed of anti-rape and Take Back the Night activity, released statistics in 1991 showing no reports of rape, date or otherwise, among its 2,200 students. Same for Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Brown—and Antioch, author of the strictest, most hilarious sexual correctness code in American academia.

How does one explain the vast discrepancy—1 in 2 differs from 1 in 1,000 by a factor of 500—between the real numbers and the fantastic numbers that have entered the popular imagination? Easy. Deviancy has again been redefined—up. Rape has been expanded by Koss and other researchers to include behavior that you and I would not recognize as rape. And not just you and I—the supposed victims themselves do not recognize it as rape. In the Koss study, 73 percent of the women she labeled as rape victims did not consider themselves to have been raped. Fully 42 percent had further sexual relations with the so-called rapist.

Now, women who have been raped are not generally known for going back for more sex with their assailants. Something is wrong here. What is wrong is the extraordinarily loose definition of sexual coercion and rape. Among the questions Koss asked her subjects were these: "Have you given in to sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because you were overwhelmed by a man's continual arguments and pressure?" and "Have you had sex-

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ual intercourse when you didn't want to because a man gave you alcohol or drugs?" The Stanford study, the one that turned up one out of three female students as victims of date rape, rests on respondents' self-report of "full sexual activity when they did not want to."

It is a common enough experience for people (both men and women) to be of two minds about having sex, and yet decide, reluctantly but certainly freely, to go ahead even though they do not really want to. Call that rape and there are few who escape the charge.

The cornerstone of this new and breathtakingly loose definition is the idea of verbal coercion. Consider this definition from the "Nonviolent Sexual Coercion" chapter in *Acquaintance Rape: The Hidden Crime* (John Wiley, 1991): "We define verbal sexual coercion as a woman's consenting to unwanted sexual activity because of a man's verbal arguments, not including verbal threats of physical force." With rape so radically defined up—to include offering a drink or being verbally insistent—it is no surprise that the result is an epidemic of sexual deviancy.

Of course, behind these numbers is an underlying ideology about the inherent aberrancy of all heterosexual relations. As Andrea Dworkin once said, "Romance ... is rape embellished with meaningful looks." The date rape epidemic is just empirical dressing for a larger theory which holds that because relations between men and women are inherently unequal, sex can never be truly consensual. It is always coercive.

"The similarity between the patterns, rhythms, roles and emotions, not to mention acts, which make up rape (and battery) on the one hand and intercourse on the other..." writes MacKinnon, "makes it difficult to sustain the customary distinctions between pathology and normalcy, violence and sex." And "Compare victims' reports of rape with women's reports of sex. They look a lot alike.... In this light, the major distinction between intercourse (normal) and rape (abnormal) is that the normal happens so often that one cannot get anyone to see anything wrong with it." Or as Susan Estrich puts it, "Many feminists would argue that so long as women are powerless relative to men, viewing 'yes' as a sign of true consent is misguided." But if "yes" is not a sign of true consent, then what is? A notarized contract?

And if there is no such thing as real consent, then the radical feminist ideal is realized: all intercourse is rape. Who needs the studies? The incidence of rape is not 25 percent or 33 or 50. It is 100 percent. Then Naomi Wolf can write in *The Beauty Myth* that we have today "a situation among the young in which boys rape and girls get raped *as a normal course of events.*" (Her italics.)

Date rape is only the most extreme example of deviancy redefined broadly enough to catch in its net a huge chunk of normal, everyday behavior. It is the most extreme example because it is criminal. But then there are the lesser offenses, a bewildering array of transgressions that come under the rubric of sexual harassment, the definition of which can be equally loose and floating but is always raised high enough to turn innocent behavior into deviancy. As Allan Bloom wrote, "What used to be understood as modes of courtship are now seen as modes of male intimidation."

V.

So much then for the family and normal heterosexual relations. On now to the third great area of the new deviancy: thought crimes.

This summer, I was visited by an FBI agent doing a routine background check on a former employee of mine now being considered for some high administration post. The agent went through the usual checklist of questions that I had heard many times before: questions about financial difficulties, drug abuse, alcoholism. Then he popped a new one: Did this person ever show any prejudice to a group based on race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, etc.? I assumed that he was not interested in whether the person had been involved in any racial incident. The FBI would have already known about that. What he wanted to know about was my friend's deeper thoughts, feelings he might have betrayed only to someone with whom he had worked intimately for two years. This was the point in the interview at which I was supposed to testify whether I had heard my friend tell any sexist or racist jokes or otherwise show signs of hidden prejudice. That is when it occurred to me that insensitive speech had achieved official status as a thought crime.

Now, again we start with real deviance—racial violence of the kind once carried out by the Klan or today by freelancers like the two men in Tampa recently convicted of a monstrous racial attack on a black tourist. These are outlawed and punished. So are the more benign but still contemptible acts of nonviolent racial discrimination, as in housing, for example. But now that overt racial actions have been criminalized and are routinely punished, the threshold for deviancy has been ratcheted up. The project now is to identify prejudiced thinking, instincts, anecdotes, attitudes.

The great arena for this project is the American academy. The proliferation of speech codes on campuses, restrained only by their obvious unconstitutionality, was an attempt by universities to curtail speech that may cause offense to groups designated for special protection. A University of Michigan student, for example, offers the opinion *in class* that homosexuality is an illness, and finds himself hauled before a formal university hearing on charges of harassing students on the basis of sexual orientation.

The irony here is quite complete. It used to be that homosexuality was considered deviant. But now that it has been declared a simple lifestyle choice, those who are not current with the new definitions, and have the misfortune to say so in public, find themselves suspected of deviancy.

There is, of course, the now-famous case of the Israeli born University of Pennsylvania student who called a group of rowdy black sorority sisters making noise out

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side his dorm in the middle of the night "water buffaloes" (his rough translation from the Hebrew *behema*). He was charged with racial harassment. A host of learned scholars was assigned the absurd task of locating the racial antecedents of the term. They could find none. (They should have asked me. I could have saved them a lot of trouble. My father called me behemah so many times it almost became a term of endearment. I don't think he was racially motivated.) Nonetheless, the university, convinced that there was some racial animus behind that exotic term and determined not to let it go unpunished, tried to pressure the student into admitting his guilt. Penn offered him a plea bargain. Proceedings would be stopped if he confessed and allowed himself to be re-educated through a "program for living in a diverse community environment."

Consider: the psychotic raving in the middle of Broadway is free to rave. No one will force him into treatment. But a student who hurls "water buffalo" at a bunch of sorority sisters is threatened with the ultimate sanction at the disposal of the university—expulsion—unless he submits to treatment to correct his deviant thinking.

This may seem ironic but it is easily explained. Under the new dispensation it is not insanity but insensitivity that is the true sign of deviant thinking, requiring thought control and re-education. One kind of deviancy we are prepared to live with; the other, we are not. Indeed, one kind, psychosis, we are hardly prepared to call deviancy at all. As Moynihan points out, it is now part of the landscape.

VI.

The mentally ill are not really ill. They just lack housing. It is the rest of us who are guilty of disordered thinking for harboring—beneath the bland niceties of middle-class life—racist, misogynist, homophobic and other corrupt and corrupting insensitivities.

Ordinary criminality we are learning to live with. What we are learning we cannot live with is the heretofore unrecognized violence against women that lurks beneath the facade of ordinary, seemingly benign, heterosexual relations.

The single-parent and broken home are now part of the landscape. It is the Ozzie and Harriet family, rife with abuse and molestation, that is the seedbed of deviance.

The rationalization of deviancy reaches its logical conclusion. The deviant is declared normal. And the normal is unmasked as deviant. That, of course, makes us all that much more morally equal. The project is complete. What real difference is there between us?

And that is the point. Defining deviancy up, like defining deviancy down, is an adventure in moral equivalence. As such, it is the son of an old project that met its demise with the end of the Soviet empire. There once was the idea of moral equivalence between the East and the West. Even though the Soviets appeared to be imperialist and brutal and corrupt and rapacious, we were really as bad as they were. We could match them crime for crime throughout the world.

Well, this species of moral equivalence is now dead. The liberation of the Communist empire, the opening of the archives, the testimony of the former inmates—all these have made a mockery of this version of moral equivalence.

But ideology abhors a vacuum. So we have a new version of moral equivalence: the moral convergence within Western society of the normal and the deviant. It is a bold new way to strip the life of the bourgeois West of its moral sheen. Because once it becomes, to use MacKinnon's words, "difficult to sustain the customary distinctions between pathology and normalcy," the moral superiority to which bourgeois normalcy pretends vanishes.

And the perfect vehicle for exposing the rottenness of bourgeois life is defining deviancy up. After all, the law-abiding middle classes define their own virtue in contrast to the deviant, a contrast publicly dramatized by opprobrium, ostracism and punishment. And now it turns out that this great contrast between normality and deviance is a farce. The real deviants, mirabile dictu, are those who carry the mask of sanity, the middle classes living on their cozy suburban streets, abusing their children, violating their women and harboring deep inside them the most unholy thoughts.

Defining deviancy up is a new way of satisfying an old ideological agenda. But it also fills a psychological need. The need was identified by Moynihan: How to cope with the explosion of real deviancy? One way is denial: defining real deviancy down creates the pretense that deviance has disappeared because it has been redefined as normal. Another strategy is distraction: defining deviancy up creates brand-new deviancies that we can now go off and fight. That distracts us from real deviancy and gives us the feeling that, despite the murder and mayhem and madness around us, we are really preserving and policing our norms.

Helpless in the face of the explosion of real criminality, for example, we satisfy our crime-fighting needs with a crusade against date rape. Like looking for your lost wallet under the street lamp even though you lost it elsewhere, this job is easier even if not terribly relevant to the problem at hand. Defining deviancy up creates a whole new universe of behavior to police, and—a bonus—a higher class of offender. More malleable, too: the guilt-ridden bourgeois, the vulnerable college student, is a far easier object of social control than the hardened criminal or the raving lunatic.

These new crusades do nothing, of course, about real criminality or lunacy. But they make us feel that we are making inroads on deviancy nonetheless. A society must feel that it is policing its norms by combating deviancy. Having given up fighting the real thing, we can't give up the fight. So we fight the new deviancy with satisfying vigor. That it is largely a phantom and a phony seems not to matter at all. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Truth and Consequences

Every advance costs something. The invention of the phonograph diminished the playing and singing that people did in their homes or in groups. The new farming procedures that give us strawberries and tomatoes all year 'round affected their quality. And so on. Another example is the documentary film.

It has provided new insights and intimacies too numerous even to exemplify, yet this advance, too, costs something. For instance, **The War Room** (October). This is a documentary about the group that managed the Clinton presidential campaign, headed by James Carville and George Stephanopoulos. We follow their hectic activity, interspersed with comic byplay and emotional ventings, from the New Hampshire primary to victory, and every moment of it is absorbing.

But all through the picture I kept wondering, "Is this *it*? Is this how history is made? Is this how my fate, the fate of my country, is decided?" I'm not extraordinarily naïve about politics and politicking, but from *The War Room* I got almost embarrassing enlightenment. Should a campaign with a global effect have such a discomfiting resemblance—except in numbers—to a campaign for the presidency of a university student council? If it does, should I know about it? Shouldn't there be—beneficially—a bit more mystification, grandeur, about momentous matters? Is the enlightenment worth the cost?

"After such knowledge, what forgiveness?" asked Eliot in one of the most famous questions of the century. Was that a plea for ignorance? I think not, no more than this review. Eliot went on to remind us that "history has many cunning passages, contrived corridors and issues," and his question was just an acknowledgement of the cost of exploring those corridors. *The War Room* is far from the first documentary to uncover what happens behind the scenes in politics. (D.A. Pennebaker, who made it with Chris Hegedus, has been involved in some of its predecessors.) But it and films like it go a long way toward reordering priorities. In politics, backstage has become forestage, immutably.

Isn't this healthy? Probably. But then there's *The Wild Duck* and *The Iceman Cometh*. Both Ibsen and O'Neill knew what Eliot (again!) said elsewhere: "Human kind cannot bear very much reality." And if reality tells us that all is manipulation, then what's left to manipulate *about*?

None of this is to malign Carville or Stephanopoulos or their associates, who did their jobs with conviction of purpose. I'm simply not sure that I needed to see them doing their jobs. We're in an age now—it's part of the cost of technological advance—when the fact that something can be known is taken to mean that it ought to be known. Possibly the biggest danger in this process is the belief that by telling all the available facts, we arrive at truth.

About a presidential campaign, there are at least three kinds of experience. First, the campaign *en face*. Here skepticism is imperative, salutary. Then there's the backstage view. Here skepticism can turn to cynicism. And then there's something larger, quieter, truer, that encompasses both the oratory and the maneuverings, something that lets us perceive there is no more probity or fakery in politics than in ourselves and that, despite the merchandising, we must *care* or we absolutely ensure tragedy—the tragedy that threatens anyway. Backstage documentaries imply that there is no third sense, that the backstage view is the end. That's the real cost of *The War Room*.

This autumn the press has carried reports on French cultural worries about the current GATT negotiations. Liberalized trade agreements on audio-visual materials, which include film, would mean, warn the French, that (*a*) the European Community would have to rescind its rule that 50 percent of the films shown on European T.V. must be made in Europe; and (*b*) France would either have to cancel subsidies and other supports to French films or else make them available to everybody. (These subsidies currently amount to $220 million annually, derived from taxes on T.V. producers and film-theater receipts.)

Free trade, says Jacques Toubon, the culture minister, means that U.S. films would swallow even more of French screen time. Between 1979 and 1989 the U.S. share of the French box office rose from 31 percent to 57 percent. Recently *Jurassic Park* opened in 450 French cinemas out of a total of 1,800 available, at a time when *The Last Action Hero* was playing in 330 of the remainder. Asks Toubon: "What's left for the others?"

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Flight of the Innocent. *Italian. A 10-year-old Calabrian boy, child of kidnappers, gets entangled in the kidnapping of a rich 10-year-old Siennese boy. A bit fancy in treatment but gripping. (Reviewed 11/15/93)* **Gettysburg.** *The three-day battle re-created with fascinating precision. Only the "human" interludes are sometimes soggy. The rest is chilling. (11/8/93)* **It's All True.** *A documentary about the making and unmaking of Orson Welles's documentary of the same name (1941-2). Another sad look at an unfulfilled life. (11/15/93)* **Ruby in Paradise.** *Ashley Judd, a newcomer, is completely winning as a young Tennessee woman out to change her life in Florida. Victor Nunez wrote and directed tenderly. (11/1/93)* **—SK**

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No one who reads this column can doubt my horror at the possible further waning of the "personal" film, made much more often abroad than here, because screens are taken over by blockbusters. Film-making around the world has been injured badly enough by general economic conditions; further stifling by giant Hollywood machines is a terrible prospect. Let everything be done that is possible and sensible to promote personal film—everywhere.

But there's a kicker. The French are fundamentally agitating against their own people. No one holds pistols to the heads of French filmgoers—or Italian or Finnish or Dutch filmgoers—forcing them to attend Spielberg and Schwarzenegger pictures. Most people want them. Certainly those who want other sorts of films ought to have the chance to get them, but Toubon doesn't mention that he's safeguarding a minority interest. Art progresses only by that minority, but Toubon and friends talk as if they were protecting a great mass of French virgins from ravishment by drooling American brutes. Toubon should at least realize that he is trying to legislate taste.

The same basic facts apply to Janet Reno's recent statements on T.V. violence. She spoke as if T.V. producers were the equivalent of poisoners slipping virus cultures into a city's water supply without the population's knowledge. T.V. producers are simply catering to an open, huge appetite. It's the reasons for the appetite that need our attention. Everyone with a scintilla of compassion and brains has an idea of what those reasons are, and can see that "uplifting" T.V. is like putting a Band-Aid on internal illness.

Gas Bubble Note. Last week I reviewed a good new Italian film, *Flight of the Innocent*, a debut. Subsequently *The New York Times* carried an interview with the director, Carlo Carlei, who has been summoned to Hollywood to consider deals. From the interview: "'I hope I won't lose my integrity,' he said several times as he sipped mineral water."

May San Pellegrino protect him. •

Anxiety of Innocence

By Helen Vendler

American Poetry: The Nineteenth Century edited by John Hollander

(The Library of America, 2 volumes, 2,149 pp., $70)

Of all the handsome volumes of The Library of America, this anthology of American poetry of the nineteenth century is the most useful. There is simply nothing else like it in print. John Hollander, a poet and a professor of poetry at Yale, has collected "poetry" in the broadest sense, housing American Indian ritual chants, anonymous folk songs and black spirituals under the same roof with Emerson, Dickinson and Whitman. Between the nameless folk poets and the well-known authors lie the many lesser verse-writers, some of them remembered for only a single poem, such as "The Night Before Christmas" or "We Three Kings of Orient Are," "The Old Oaken Bucket" or "Home Sweet Home." (I give the familiar titles rather than the formal ones.) And this grand and fascinating collection prompts thoughts about the poetry of the New World, and about what has recently been called "canon-formation," or the recommending of some authors above others.

Hollander's eye as a prospector is expert, and it generates trust in the reader. He pans for flashes of gold and he finds them. The gold, in the minor poets, appears as theme rather than as manner; but even in the more faded poems the themes are interesting enough, and the conventions of verse well-enough observed, that the pieces are not formally painful to read. The informative notes on the writers fill out the impression left by any unknown poem that catches the reader's eye. I had never heard of Josiah Canning (1816-1892), but Hollander, who rightly picks out poems of continuing cultural interest from those of his poets who are relatively unoriginal, prints a poem of his called "The Indian Gone!" which tracks the guilt of a New England farmer finding Indian relics turned up by his plough:

Beneath me in the furrow lay
A relic of the chase, full low;
I brushed the crumbling soil away—

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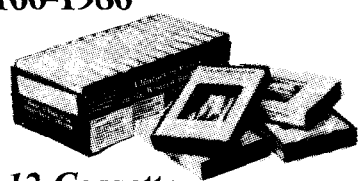

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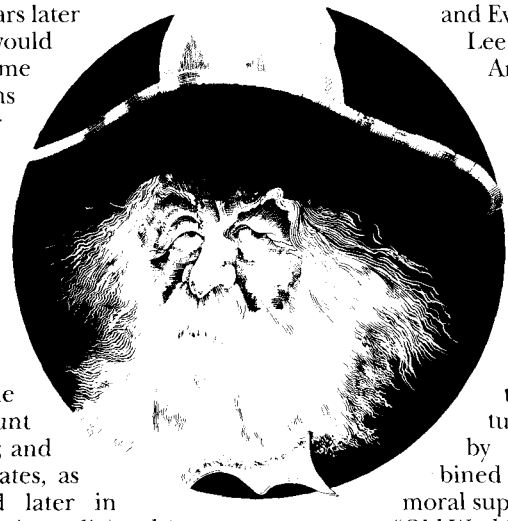
The Indian fashioned it, I know,
But where is he?

When I turned to the notes, I found that Canning, who was an educated farmer in Gill, Massachusetts, adopted the pseudonym "The Peasant Bard"; and that one of his books was called *The Harp and Plow* (1852) and another *Connecticut River Reeds* (1892). From such small facts, a whole world arises: a world of emulation of England and its eighteenth-century ploughman- and thresher-poets, but also a world that knows about Pan and Syrinx and the birth of verse. A few years later in Ireland, Yeats would call an early volume of his own poems *The Wind Among the Reeds*, claiming the same classical ancestry for Irish poetry as Canning claimed for American work.



The classical poets and the English poets haunt the new colonies; and in the United States, as in Ireland (and later in Canada and in Australia), the question for the local poet is how, since the colonized are only "peasant bards" in European eyes, he is to make a literature. The reeds are not lacking and the breath is here. But what will be the words, and what the tune? The best poem on this perplexity postdates Hollander's volumes. It is "Pan with Us" by Robert Frost, and it shows that Canning's anxieties about American reed-flutes were still very much alive in the early twentieth century. Frost's Pan (derived from Elizabeth Barrett Browning's) throws away his reed-pipes, and wonders what instrument, and what tune, will suit the American poet:

They were pipes of pagan mirth,
And the world had found new terms of worth.
He laid him down on the sunburned earth
And raveled a flower and looked away.
Play? Play?—What should he play?

One could read Hollander's comprehensive anthology as our response, as Americans, to European tradition. And although the story of our uncertainty, our imitativeness, our abjectness and our bumptiousness is in outline well-known, I found that Hollander's unfamiliar poets, such as Canning, put new glosses on the familiar narrative. Even "The Night Before Christmas" (that domestication of Santa Claus) and the "Three Kings of Orient" are important to a young country; Yeats saw the Magi in Ireland, and later Eliot re-domesticated them in American poetry. In songs such as "Home Sweet Home" and "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny," the nostalgia felt by early American settlers for "home," meaning England, is transformed into an indigenous longing for American scenes. Even scenes from the outer limits of American poetry—Poe's dismal tarns in a "dream land" haunted by ghouls—form part, now, of America's legendary landscape, populated by the poets with the shades of Hiawatha and Evangeline, Annabel Lee and Little Orphan Annie.

Almost any random page of this collection will yield yet another set of tangled feelings about America and Europe: the "nature" of the one compared with the "art" of the other, the cultural inferiority felt by the colony combined with its asserted moral superiority to the corrupt "Old World" (an assertion sardonically countered by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, who in "No Classes!" jeers at the idea that America had abolished the class system). These nineteenth-century anxieties were not laid to rest until after the Second World War.

The tailoring of evidence in poems that set Europe against America is always, needless to say, of cultural interest. William Cullen Bryant, addressing the painter Thomas Cole as Cole departs for Europe, describes an America offering a set of wide and unpopulated vistas:

Lone lakes—savannas where the bison roves—
Rocks rich with summer garlands—solemn streams—
Skies, where the desert eagle wheels and screams—
Spring bloom and autumn blaze of boundless groves.

Not only are there no Indians visible in these nineteenth-century savannas, there are no Americans visible either. In Europe, by contrast, Cole will see "every where the trace of men, / Paths, homes, graves, ruins...." Cultural historians have repeatedly pointed out how necessary to the idea of "manifest destiny" was the obliteration from consciousness of the long possession of America by indigenous tribes of (erroneously named) "Indians" (now erroneously renamed "Native Americans," as if they had not immigrated here too). It is from such documents as Bryant's poem, with its erasure of human habitation in the "boundless groves," that cultural historians draw their damning evidence of the silent literary obliteration of the Indians.

Turn a page in the anthology, however, and here is Bryant fully conscious, in "The Prairies," of the mound builders and "the roaming hunter tribes" who preceded the European arrival. And yet manifest destiny here, too, smooths out the scene, as races "arise ... and perish" according to God's will:

The red man too—
Has left the blooming wilds he ranged so long,
And, nearer to the Rocky Mountains, sought
A wider hunting ground.

No explanation for the departure of the "red man" is offered, but an analogy is immediately given: "The beaver builds / No longer by these streams but far away...."

One is ashamed, today, of the analogy between Indian and beaver, not out of "political correctness" but out of the conviction that in Bryant's day one would oneself have found his analogy unexceptional. Bryant accepts the given order of his world; when he thinks of the future, his imagination can go no further than to imagine "the sweet and solemn hymn / Of Sabbath worshipers." It will take Wallace Stevens, in "Sunday Morning," to imagine, with imperfect conviction, an American religion that has dispensed with Christianity. To dispense with Christianity is to emancipate oneself at last from Europe.

In making his selections from the minor poets, Hollander has decided, as I have said, to print verse of topical or thematic interest to us today, so that we can perceive how our predecessors thought about the New World—its patriotism, religion, art, Indians, war and landscape. Conflicting voices—whites often complacent, blacks righteously indignant, Indians elegiac—create here a fiercely dissonant chorus. On facing pages, for instance, we can find James Gates Perceval (1795-1856) and George Moses Horton (1798?-1880?). Perceval, a learned physician and geologist, i performing one of the duties of a poe in a new world, describing a phe nomenon (a coral reef) unknown t England and to English poetry. Ye the only vocabulary available to him the English pastoral lexicon of grove and boughs, of "corn on the uplan lea":

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Deep in the wave is a coral grove,
Where the purple mullet, and gold-fish
rove....
From coral rocks the sea-plants lift
Their boughs, where the tides and
billows flow...
There with a light and easy motion,
The fan-coral sweeps through the clear
deep sea;
And the yellow and scarlet tufts of ocean,
Are bending like corn on the upland lea...

George Moses Horton, across the page, was known as "the Colored Bard of North Carolina." The question marks after the dates of his birth and death suggest the unimportance of blacks to nineteenth-century white record-keeping. Horton did not have the luxury of wondering at varieties of coral. His outburst "On Liberty and Slavery" is a cry to heaven:

Alas! and am I born for this,
To wear this slavish chain?
Deprived of all created bliss,
Through hardship, toil and pain!

The taste of today finds the slave's despair moving and the scientist's praise of coral pallid. But neither a sympathy for the slave nor an indifference to the coral-lover is a properly aesthetic response. Both poems are equally uninteresting as accomplishments of art. The physician writes conventional pastoral; his palette has none of the sharp "colors of rhetoric" that would fit the menacing brilliance of the tropics (for that, American poetry would have to await Hart Crane). And Horton's ritual invocation of "the grief / And anguish of a slave" merely recycles well-worn words. It was in the prose of slave narratives that these clichés were surpassed, and that the reality of slavery found more adequate expressive language. Still, Perceval on the one hand and Horton on the other—and many other minor poets in this collection—contribute to the gradual work of cultural synthesis by which, very slowly, Europe becomes less threatening and America is given a verbal equivalent, its coral reefs and its slaves both part of its emerging literary identity.

Insofar as verse engages in providing representations of America in language, it performs that primary work not very differently from other verbal means: novels, essays, journalism, sermons, advertisements, drama, vaudeville, school texts and so on. Perceval's admiration of the flora and fauna of the New World is as old as the conquistadors, and is a frequent feature of American self-description in prose as well as in poetry; Horton's indignation is an inevitable feature of all slave literature, prose as well as verse. That these authors cast their sentiments into rhyme means that they honored "poetry" as a repository of cherished and intense moments. We learn from them what their culture thought suitable for verse, and what sort of writing might find publication: descriptions of nature's harmless beauties and expressions of religious hope.

But when we pass from Hollander's minor poets to his major figures, we learn what it is that makes a poet earn a place in the esteem of fellow writers and eventually in the esteem of fellow citizens—a place that poets like Perceval and Horton, however sincere their thoughts and feelings, will never attain. There has been so much tendentious writing about canon-formation that it is useful to see, in Hollander's generous-spirited anthology, just what his "canon" is, and why he does not allot, to Perceval or to Horton or to dozens of others, the fifty or more pages he gives to his "canonical" authors. These latter are—the names will surprise no one—Bryant, Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Whitman, Melville and Dickinson. The poet Poe is rightly demoted below this group. (His true talents, which were in fiction and criticism, are amply represented elsewhere in the Library of America.)

The canonical writers, then, are all

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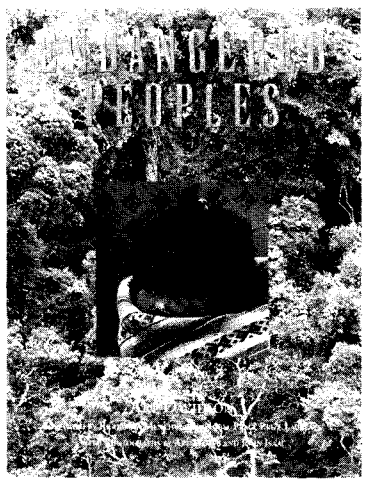

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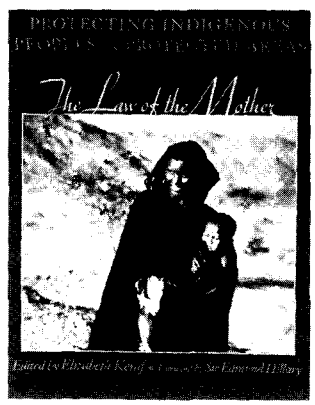

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white and all male, except for Dickinson. And this, according to current cant, can lead to only one conclusion: that white males such as Hollander have "constructed" the canon after their own image, admitting Dickinson as a sort of token pet or mascot. Many recent critics, expressing this opinion, willfully refuse to see that most of the writers "excluded" from "the canon" are also white males; but this is only the most egregious suppression of fact by those convinced that canon-formation is wholly political and "hegemonic." White male writers are in fact "excluded" in greater numbers than any other group, since there are proportionally more of them in our publishing history. The first question of those interested in canon-formation ought to be: Which white males have made it into the canon, and which have not, and why? This would eliminate all the dishonesty and tedium about the "exclusion" of women and blacks, and would focus on the real question, which is not about politics, but about the degree of talent in verbal expression.

It is true that many verbally and rhythmically talented people were, in the nineteenth century as now, denied training for their talent because they lacked money, education and opportunity. This is a properly political fact. It is as applicable to poor white males as to women and blacks, and it should be addressed—it has been addressed, if insufficiently—in political terms, by the establishment of public schools and public libraries, by scholarships for the poor, by giving women and blacks the vote, by desegregating universities and so on. But canon-formation is a process that takes place long *after* writing and publication. It deals only with *faits accomplis*. Faced with all the poetry written in the United States during the nineteenth century, and published then (or, in the case of Dickinson, later), how is Hollander to allocate his pages?

Two principles of allocation come to mind: representativeness and talent. Hollander has honored both. With respect to representativeness, he leaves out nobody with any reputation at the time, so far as I can see; and he chooses poems with interestingly representative themes and forms. The usual genres (the elegy, the love poem, the patriotic poem, the war poem, the nature poem, the religious poem, the historical poem, the sonnet, the blank-verse meditation, the ballad and so on) are all on lavish display. The wide representativeness of the anthology is one of its great claims on our attention. It was clever of Hollander to have found Mark Twain's "Ode to Stephen Dowling Bots, Dec'd." and Edith Wharton's "Mona Lisa." It was more than clever to have included almost seventy pages of much-loved anonymous folk songs and spirituals (besides the many familiar songs by named authors scattered through the volumes). And it was both responsible and creative to have unearthed and reproduced almost 100 pages of nineteenth-century versions of American Indian poetry.

These Indian materials will provoke first a pain that so much should have been lost, and second a regret that so much of what was preserved should have been transcribed into saccharine English verse, such as this "Medicine Song of an Indian Lover":

> Who, maiden, makes this river flow?
> The Spirit—he makes its ripples glow—
> But I have a charm that can make thee, dear,
> Steal o'er the wave to thy lover here.

The more suggestive renditions of Indian verse do without rhyme. The beautiful and elliptical transcriptions of Southern Paiute poems, songs and chants made by John Wesley Powell between 1868 and 1880 read like American haiku. Here is one:

> The crest of the mountain
> Forever remains,
> *Forever remains,*
> Though rocks continually fall.

And here, another:

> The edge of the sky
> Is the home of the river

There are grimmer moments. A Kwakiutl song of a cannibal spirit, recorded by Franz Boas, runs:

> I went all around the world to find food.
> I went all around the world to find human flesh.
> I went all around the world to find human heads.
> I went all around the world to find corpses.

Like the folk songs and spirituals, the Indian chants come to us from Hollander's pages lacking their music, their improvisational changes and their social context. Still, they belong here as a part of the historical poetic deposit of this terrain that we loosely call "American" (for want of an adjective derived from "the United States"). The Indian poetic legacy did not much affect our poetry in English until the nineteenth century, when Longfellow attempted to render its spirit in "Hiawatha," but it has increasingly been mined by contemporary poets, those of Indian descent and others.

Almost unwillingly, I withdrew my gaze from the great variety of the representative poetic scenery, much of it unfamiliar, set before me by Hollander, to turn to the writers of significant talent here recanonized. These poets would be less important, of course, in an anthology called "Nineteenth-Century Poetry in English": Bryant and Whittier and Emerson would shrink in importance next to Wordsworth and Byron, not to mention Keats and Tennyson. The local relativity of importance in "canon-formation" is often forgotten by political critics; and even though Hollander, for the purpose of this American collection, elevates American poets, he would be the first to class some of them lower in another, broader kind of anthology.

Here, of course, they have pride of place. And since more than 100 of Hollander's 141 poets are white males, the real question about canon-formation is why, out of 100 white males, only six are allotted fifty or more pages. After one has answered *that* question in a reasonable way, one might, as I have said, be allowed to proceed to questions about women and blacks. The loose expression by which certain people are said to have been "excluded" from "the canon" has been used, confusingly, to cover several social facts. The first is that of exclusion, in life, from privileges such as education or access to publication. A decent level of education is necessary for distinguished literary production, and the rise in the number of well-written works by women and blacks is directly proportional to the accessibility of higher education for those groups. In this sense, the possibility of authorship is indeed linked to class privilege.

But "the canon" is not made from possibilities; it is made from publications. And for this reason, class privilege in itself gets you nowhere as an author. Not all the class privilege in the world can get you into the canon. The Percevals of the world, in spite of their Yale degrees and their social position and their publications, are "excluded" from the canon even by their fellow white males from Yale like Hollander. And no tears are shed on their behalf. Their minor talents have decreed for them a minor place.

Canonical status may come more swiftly, of course, for those of the talented who are well-placed by birth, sex or education to have their talents recognized; but it comes more lastingly to the talented who most master and renew their medium. In life, Longfellow had it easier than Whitman, Whittier than Dickinson; but in the long run Whi

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man's 220 pages here and Dickinson's ninety pages proclaim them the poets by whom others are measured.

What, one can ask, is Hollander seeing in them when he gives them the lion's share of his pages? "Transgression," it would be tempting to answer fashionably. Whitman's unrhymed lines and Dickinson's erratic syntax proclaim some wish for formal deviation; and the notable blasphemies of each are arresting enough, and frequent enough, to make us certain of their often transgressive thematic intent. It is even true that, after the bland "beauty" and the pious clichés of the minor poets, we welcome the "hankering, gross, mystical, nude" Whitman, or Dickinson's scornful repudiation of the "Dimity Convictions" of her fellow Amherst "Gentlewomen." But the defiance of convention in both Whitman and Dickinson is a sign of something much larger than mere contempt for bourgeois tractability.

It is the sign of a soul extending itself as far as it can, and occasionally (but only tangentially) confronting—with indignation, irritation or asperity—a set of social limits that it encounters in its path. The social limits are not the point; it is the awe-inspiring extension of consciousness in both poets that defines them. That a reclusive New England small-town virgin should work herself up into becoming the authorial presence we call "Emily Dickinson" is only slightly less terrifying than the inborn talent that drove her to such fierce attainment.

Dickinson's own account of the poet's work, of her own work, is not at all a transgressive one:

> This was a Poet—It is That
> Distills amazing sense
> From ordinary Meanings—
> And Attar so immense
>
> From the familiar species
> That perished by the Door—
> We wonder it was not Ourselves
> Arrested it—before—

The ordinary "selves" who appear in this poem do not find the poet "transgressive" or "blasphemous"; they find, rather, that the poet "makes sense" ("amazing sense," to be sure), a sense that is so immediately convincing that it seems they ought to have been able to grasp it by themselves. It is this uncovering of what *is*, this arresting of the moment when, as Stevens said, "the bright obvious stands forth in cold," that distinguishes genius from talent.

Genius is transgressive more by accident—as it strives valiantly toward its intuitions of reality, stumbling along the way over the hurdles of convention—than by intent. The plainest effort of realism—say, Dickinson's Fly, buzzing in the death chamber—almost unconsciously overturns, in that poem, the conventional invoking of the King descending to claim the Christian soul:

> The Eyes around—had wrung them dry—
> And Breaths were gathering firm
> For that last Onset—when the King
> Be witnessed—in the Room—
>
> I willed my Keepsakes—Signed away
> What portion of me be
> Assignable—and then it was
> There interposed a Fly—
>
> With Blue—uncertain stumbling Buzz—
> Between the light—and me—
> And then the Windows failed—and then
> I could not see to see—

Dickinson's narrative soberly foregoes the atheist's crow of triumph, and it is respectful toward the Eyes and the Breaths gathering in vigil for the King. It is almost as though, if the Fly had not "interposed" itself, the Vision might have arrived. But if you are, as Dickinson was, a skeptic, then you are bound to report that it was the Fly, and not the King, that you saw with your failing sight. Transgression, even blasphemy, is incurred as a by-product of accuracy, not as an end in itself.

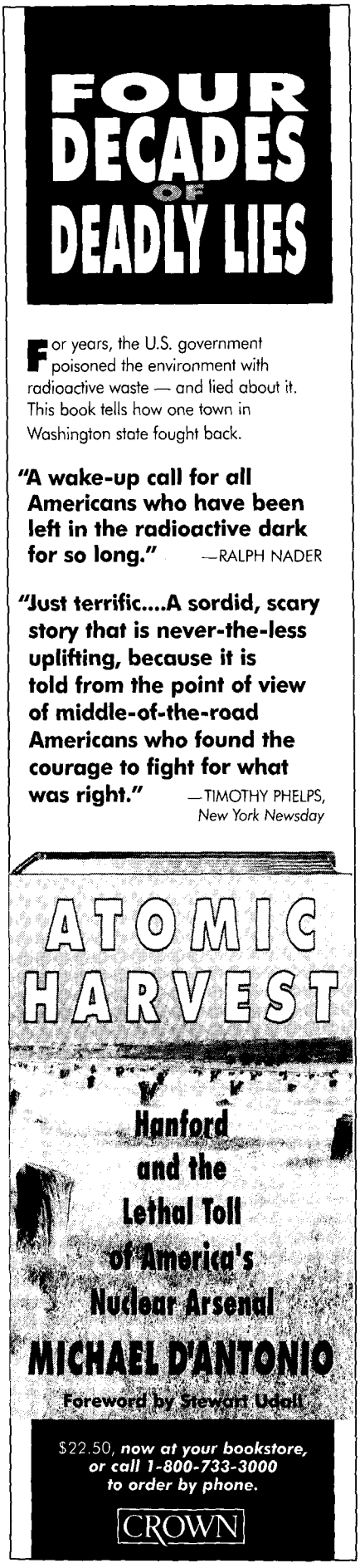
What makes the great poets "great" is that they are always of two minds. Unlike the ordinary and practical skeptic, Dickinson is fully aware of the compulsions of belief:

> This World is not Conclusion.
> A Species stands beyond—
> Invisible, as Music—
> But positive, as Sound—
> It beckons, and it baffles—
> Philosophy—don't know—
> And through a Riddle, at the last—
> Sagacity, must go—

At times, reading the great poets as they discover the "bright obvious," one thinks that greatness is simply a matter of refusing prejudices, abhorring single-mindedness and exerting an acute and many-sided intelligence. Though Dickinson knows the truth of all that she has said about faith in the first stanza of "This World is not Conclusion," she ends the poem with one of her most corrosive epigrams:

> Narcotics cannot still the Tooth
> That nibbles at the Soul—

Yet revealing the obvious alone, being of two minds alone, will not suffice for great poetry. As soon as one wants to define poetic genius by Dickinson's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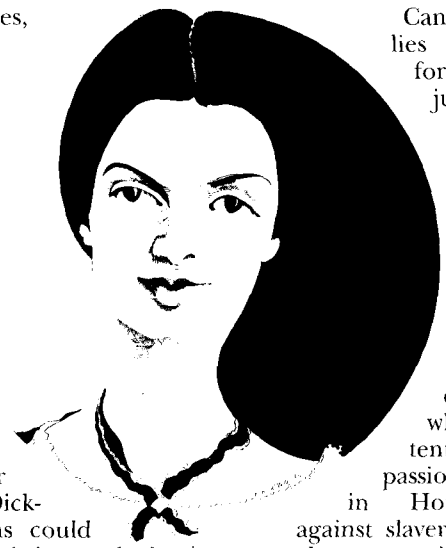
sharp and allegorical moral insight, she reminds us of the indispensability to all poetry of that music which is the sensual support of imaginative intelligence:

> Nor would I be a Poet—
> It's finer—own the Ear—
> Enamored—impotent—content—
> The License to revere,
> A privilege so awful
> What would the Dower be,
> Had I the Art to stun myself
> With Bolts of Melody!

We notice that Dickinson is not afraid, in her conclusion here, to imagine herself as Jove, unleasher of thunderbolts. Genius is not modest in its musical ambitions.

It would be a mistake to read Dickinson's metaphor of Jovian bolts ideologically, as a "transgressive" gender-image. Dickinson, as she said of herself, speaks as a "representative" person: as a soul, rather than as a self, one might say. Her poems are often not gendered. Her "passive" position in this poem as listener (to poetry) and beholder (of painting) is a position occupied by males, too, when they are confronted by a work of aesthetic power. Recall Keats before the Elgin marbles, apologizing to them, "My spirit is too weak," or Stevens before Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*, defensive about his own "paltry nude."



Often, what Dickinson says of herself is by no means "transgressive." It is what any Christian in Amherst could have said, had she the strength of her Christian convictions. Dickinson's self-descriptions could be affirmed by any Christian soul who had come to inhabit those cosmic vistas in which Dickinson faced the chaos of the physical and moral world. Here is Dickinson as a Crescent soul—the New Moon poised in heaven, reflected in the sea:

> Behind Me—dips Eternity—
> Before Me—Immortality—
> Myself—the Term between . . .
>
> 'Tis Miracle before Me—then—
> 'Tis Miracle behind—between—
> A Crescent in the Sea—
> With Midnight to the North of Her—
> And Midnight to the South of Her—
> And Maelstrom—in the Sky—

Class privilege (which Dickinson had) and education (which she received) can only confirm, it cannot confer, this sort of blazing way with language.

How does the canon-maker decide that a poet is less than extraordinary? Dickinson's friend Helen Hunt Jackson appears in this anthology as a good example of what an educated writer of limited talent can turn out. Her best-known poem, "September," gives a list of autumn characteristics beginning

> The golden-rod is yellow;
> The corn is turning brown;
> The trees in apple orchards
> With fruit are bending down.

It then concludes, somewhat coyly,

> But none of all this beauty
> Which floods the earth and air
> Is unto me the secret
> Which makes September fair.
>
> 'Tis a thing which I remember;
> To name it thrills me yet:
> One day of one September
> I never can forget.

The passion and the imagination visible in Dickinson are entirely lacking here; the verse is pleasant, and no more.

Canon-formation relies on a set of informed comparative judgments, not on a conspiracy of "exclusions," as political criticism would have us believe. Since there is no single criterion for inclusion in the canon, inexperienced readers, who are often content with unmediated passion (like that found in Horton's outburst against slavery) see no visible reason why one passion is not as good as another. The criteria for canonizing Longfellow and Whitman, for instance, might seem troublingly antithetical: Longfellow, the college professor writing smoothly about Chaucer and Dante, appears to embrace an aesthetic that contradicts the one we associate with "Walt Whitman, one of the roughs." Yet both writers fulfill several of the indispensable criteria for the considerable poet: an ambitious set of experiments in various lyric genres; an acquaintance with the tradition of poetry known to the culture; a critical interest in conflict and contradiction; an attachment to musicality for its own sake; human sympathy; responsiveness to sense-experience; and originality in personal gesture and style.

We all know the populist Longfellow of "Hiawatha" and "Paul Revere's Ride," but in Hollander's wonderful and wide-ranging selection we meet the Longfellow who foretells America's ruin through slavery:

> There is a poor, blind Samson in this land,
> Shorn of his strength, and bound in bands of steel,
> Who may, in some grim revel, raise his hand,
> And shake the pillars of this Commonweal,
> Till the vast Temple of our liberties
> A shapeless mass of wreck and rubbish lies.

This Miltonic echo must have sent a shiver of apprehension though Longfellow's contemporaries. There is also the Longfellow from whom Frost learned so much, the exquisite poet of "Snow-Flakes" and "Aftermath," those desolate poems that remark the drearier beauties of New England:

> When the Summer fields are mown,
> When the birds are fledged and flown,
> And the dry leaves strew the path;
> With the falling of the snow,
> With the cawing of the crow,
> Once again the fields we mow
> And gather in the aftermath.
>
> Not the sweet, new grass with flowers
> Is this harvesting of ours;
> Not the upland clover bloom;
> But the rowen mixed with weeds,
> Tangled tufts from marsh and meads,
> Where the poppy drops its seeds
> In the silence and the gloom.

Longfellow's poem of a second, thinner harvest conveys, in its lingering music, all the temptations of nostalgia for youth; but it also takes a stoical and raw pleasure in the sadder poetry of crow, weeds and tangled tufts. This piece, too, like Keats's autumn ode from which it derives, springs from an "obvious" seasonal observation, neither "transgressive" or "revolutionary."

So Whittier, too—almost as lyric as Longfellow, equally moved by historical incident, similarly conscious of poetic precedent—knows that American reality requires a keen search for authentic non-English surfaces. He admits,

> I love the old melodious lays
> Which softly melt the ages through,
> The songs of Spenser's golden days,
> Arcadian Sidney's silvery phrase,
> Sprinkling our noon of time with freshest morning dew. . .

yet he realizes that American vers

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requires something different, more effortful:

> The rigor of a frozen clime;
> The harshness of an untaught ear,
> The jarring words of one whose rhyme
> Beat often Labor's hurried time...

It was Whitman whose "untaught ear" and rhyme beating to Labor's time fulfilled Whittier's prophecy. Whitman's unexampled and cinematic eye animated his words, words he had learned by touch as he set them letter by letter in his printing-press. When Whitman appears to us in his poems, he is almost always looking, appetitively and voyeuristically, at the world:

> Looking in at the shop-windows in Broadway the whole forenoon.... pressing the flesh of my nose to the thick plate-glass,
> Wandering the same afternoon with my face turned up to the clouds;...
> Far from the settlements studying the print of animals' feet, or the moccasin-print...
> By the coffined corpse when all is still, examining with a candle...

"I fly the flight of the fluid and swallowing soul," Whitman tells us, making us notice, by contrast, how few among the minor poets have fluid souls, how few among them swallow as well as taste.

Reading any major poet is an experience in how description may be renewed. "I have a soul," any contemporary of Whitman might think. But only Whitman, hunting through the columns of his internal thesaurus, will come up with "fluid" as the first adjective for his soul, and "swallowing" as the second—the first transferred from descriptions of the physical universe ("fluid" versus "solid"), the second deriving from the actions of the body. Of all the receptive actions of the body, "swallowing" is chosen because the poet is speaking of flight. He delights in the pun on the bird-meaning of "swallow." "I fly the flight of the aerial, lighter-than-solid, swallow-like soul," goes the undersong to the printed line.

Unimaginative writers—the Helen Hunt Jacksons and the James Gates Percevals and the George Moses Hortons—do not write this way; and *that*, not their gender or their color or their social inferiority, is why they are not in the canon. It is a slander against writers and critics to suggest that they can admire only people of their own gender or class. Poets (like the young male Robert Browning writing in admiration of the older unseen female Elizabeth Barrett) admire other writers who are

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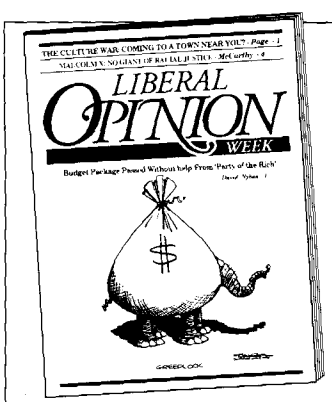

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bold and intelligent and experimental and musical and original. Just as Hopkins admired Whitman, though he thought him "a very great scoundrel," or as Bridges admired Hopkins, writers often revere authors with whom they profoundly disagree on moral questions. Over time, writers and critics have historically "excluded" from the canon those who publish feeble, conventional, unmusical and unimaginative verse, no matter how intelligent or morally worthy or passionate its sentiments.

Comparison of the selection in Hollander's anthology with the nineteenth-century selections of another excellent (but much shorter) collection, Richard Ellmann's *Oxford Book of American Verse*, which appeared in 1976, shows Hollander's comparative upgrading (among his six chief poets) of Bryant, and most importantly, of Melville. It is Melville who most comes into his own in Hollander's book (he gets eighty-six pages, close to Dickinson's ninety). Through the labors of three generations of poets, scholars and critics, Melville's significance as a poet of epic and lyric power has gradually been established.

Melville, like Whitman, feared ruin for America, given the paradoxical and unstable compound of constitutional liberty and legal slavery:

> I muse upon my country's ills—
> The tempest bursting from the waste of Time
> On the world's fairest hope linked with man's foulest crime.

And he is vivid about the Civil War:

> With shouts the torrents down the gorges go,
> And storms are formed behind the storm we feel:
> The hemlock shakes in the rafter, the oak in the driving keel.

The shouts, the torrents, the storms, the shaking hemlock, the driving keel: these are all emblems of Melville's own tumultuous nature as it infiltrates his every thought. His wide and unacademic embrace of life as a young sailor remained eager and ardent until time broke it with literary failure, an unsuccessful marriage, unrewarding work and a son's suicide. But a grim strength of mind and will in Melville held on against breakdown, and his poetry is full of wild despair checked, of abysses gaping but withstood, of an affirmation of life's forces (even if they are such as "tawny tigers feel in matted shades") against "death's silent negative." I envy those readers discovering "The Berg" and "To Ned" and "The Maldive Shark" and "After the Pleasure Party" for the first time.

Melville's short poem "Art" will do as well as anything in these powerful volumes to define what makes a piece of verse something we are willing to call by the canonical and honorific name of "poetry." Melville struggles to describe what must happen for form to be bestowed on thought, for "pulsed life" to be created:

> ... form to lend, pulsed life create,
> What unlike things must meet and mate:
> A flame to melt—a wind to freeze;
> Sad patience—joyous energies;
> Humility—yet pride and scorn;
> Instinct and study; love and hate;
> Audacity—reverence. These must mate,
> And fuse with Jacob's mystic heart,
> To wrestle with the angel—Art.

Minor poetry wrestles with nothing inside itself; it blandly or contentiously asserts. Whether it is verse of the left or verse of the right, it is all audacity or all reverence. It may flame with indignation, but it does not remember to freeze its flame into patient and coldly-considered form. It may scorn a mote of baseness, yet it lacks humility about the beam in its own eye. It forgets to study its predecessors in its rush to give its own instincts their unmeditated expression. For Melville, passion's "mystic heart" must always, in the artist, wrestle with the austere severity of aesthetic demand—itself "angelic" in that it seems, by comparison to easy passion, almost inhuman.

Critics who would idly promote any politically correct or sociologically representative text to canonical status have contempt for the taxing work entailed in the writing of a genuinely powerful poem. They scant the painful and exhilarating work of dispassionate observation, the intricate work of melodic construction, the amused work of lexical invention and most of all, the stoical and informed work of disciplining feeling into original form. To those indifferent to art, Melville's contending energies, Dickinson's metaphysical leaps, Whitman's deeply felt adjectives, will have no special appeal.

"Taste," political critics tell us, is "historically constructed," a matter of class and its ideology. To be sure, there are powerful constraints of period and class and gender on the reach of taste (as every literary historian has always recognized); but society has never been able to "set" taste, as the entire failure to indoctrinate writers in Socialist Realism bears witness. It is the sheer dreariness of single-minded and uninventive writing—no matter how worthy its subject matter or how passionate its beliefs—that ensures the continual process of canon-formation, which, after all, only says (as Hollander implicitly does by his allocation of space) that some writers are more rewarding than others.

The Western literary canon from Homer until now—by which I mean, to use Hugh Kenner's definition, writers long admired by other writers—is enormously large and capacious and inclusive and multigeneric. It is not to be confused with the tiny pedagogical canon, which we may define as various lists of books that an average class of underprepared American college students can be asked to read in one semester. No university teacher thinks that one need read only "the canon" in the sense in which it is puerilely defined in the popular press. We have all had to go well beyond "the canon" to understand any literary work that we have written about, and we have all enjoyed reading reams of highly uncanonical work (in my own case, Matthew Arnold's reports as a school inspector, or the entire run of Harriet Monroe's *Poetry*, or minor metaphysical verse or contemporary poetry as yet unsifted by time).

Pedagogically speaking, what can be learned from reading any sample of writers from the Western canon is the unique power of the word-as-form, the word when it is deployed to aesthetic, as well as philosophical or moral or descriptive, effect. Lesser writers, though they may be philosophically or morally or descriptively representative, do not exemplify or teach the power, discipline and enacted insight of aesthetic form. We ought to be clear about the desirable educational value of a student's being exposed to representativeness, and the very different and more desirable educational value of a student's encounter with supreme artistic achievement. Democratic education is bound to value representativeness, but that is no reason not to value aesthetic singularity, strength and beauty as well. An anthology such as John Hollander's is satisfying because it values both sorts of verbal work, and sensibly distinguishes between them. Hollander has allotted space on the basis of genuine aesthetic brilliance. He honors many things in making his choices, but most of all he honors depth of feeling, struggle with internal contradiction, seductive musicality and intelligence of heart.

HELEN VENDLER is Porter University Professor at Harvard University. She has recently completed a commentary on Shakespeare's Sonnets.

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Mind Games

BY ERNEST GELLNER

Martin Heidegger: A Political Life
by Hugo Ott
translated by Allan Blunden

(Basic Books, 384 pp., $30)

Heidegger's Crisis:
Philosophy and Politics in Nazi Germany
by Hans Sluga

(Harvard University Press, 320 pp., $29.95)

The twentieth century is marked, among other things, by the prominence of a distinctive kind of expiation literature. This literature consists in the disavowal of totalitarian tyranny and ideology by men whose sin was to have supported it. For both of the two great ideocratic dictatorships dominated extensive territory for a time, had an impact beyond the boundaries of its rule and secured the adherence of numerous intellectuals, by conviction or coercion or a combination of the two. Each of them collapsed ignominiously, found wanting by the court of its own choice: the Nazis believed in war and were defeated in war, the Bolsheviks believed that the secret of human history lay in the growth of productive forces and they were undone by their defeat in an economic race.

After the collapse, and often before it, those who lost their faith, or who were freed by circumstance from the obligation to subscribe to it, found themselves in a situation in which they had to face a single question: Why did they support a system guilty of such appalling crimes? Thus, to take one example, Hjalmar Schacht, the banker who helped devise the partially Keynesian system that sustained the Nazi economy, proudly settled his score with Hitler by publishing a book with that very title, *Abrechnung mit Hitler*, when he Führer was safely dead. But Schacht an also be seen on surviving newsreels rom 1940, ecstatically and interminably aking Hitler's hand by way of congratlating him on the great victory in the attle of France. He must have hurt the ührer's hand. Had Hitler won, Schacht ould no doubt have kept his *Abrechung* to himself.

Sometimes, when I attend meetings of intellectuals on the continent of Europe, as I do quite often—meetings usually dedicated to topics such as liberalism or democracy—I get bored, and relieve my boredom with a private little game. I survey the participants and ask myself how many of them, and which ones, would also be here, in the same place, eagerly discussing the "Regeneration of Europe under the Nazis" had the war gone the other way. I would not be present, of course; but it is an amusing game, and it has seen me through some dull papers and speeches.

The involvements of intellectuals in the two great dictatorships are not altogether symmetrical. The literature of expiatory de-Bolshevization is much richer than the literature of expiatory de-Nazification. The Bolsheviks had a much longer run than the Nazis; there is quite a difference between seventy years and twelve. And Nazism contained an important anti-intellectual element. What counted was warm blood, not cold reason. So, even if intellectual support or conformity was required, it was also implicitly or openly despised. The Marxists, by contrast, believed in The Unity of Theory and Practice, which meant that political leaders had to pretend to be abstract theorists and their works had to be treated with respect, and all intellectual work had to relate to *the* theory.

Thus Marxist doctrine was codified with a thoroughness and a completeness seldom rivaled since the days of high scholasticism. Equally important, the basic moral values underlying Marxism—the universal brotherhood of man, human fulfillment without exploitation or oppression—can continue, even after crimes have been committed in their name, to be upheld without shame. The erstwhile believer can claim that it was

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the practical implementation, not the moral or historical intuition, that was wrong, even if the practice was the inevitable consequence of certain aspects of the theory ("we failed to see that"). Thinkers such as Arnost Kolman or Adam Schaf could write along such lines long after the horrors of communism had ceased to be contentious.

The Nazi salvation, on the other hand, was much less respectable. It was selective, reserved for the strong and victorious; and when the Nazis lost, there was no logical bolt hole. Either way, they were wrong, whether one appeals to the laws of humanity or to the law of the jungle. They had lost twice over. And the consequence of this difference is that ex-Communists write mea culpa books, while ex-Nazis generally retire into amnesia.

With the final collapse of "real socialism" in recent years, though, a new brand of ex-Communist has emerged, the kind who stayed with the system not from deep conviction, but from acceptance of its strength and local inevitability. After history surprisingly but conclusively refuted the inescapability thesis, once again there is no escape, and the ex-Communist may resemble the ex-Nazi: converted in theory to economic ultraliberalism and in practice to mafioso capitalism, he will not write any books either. Or the book that he will write will be about realpolitik rather than Marxism. (On the one occasion when I dined with the pope, I asked him what he thought of Jaruzelski, who was then in power, and his answer was interesting. Jaruzelski, His Holiness observed, was a military man; it was no use discussing Marxist philosophy with him, *he does not know much about it.* The pope, of course, knows a great deal about philosophy. But the general does not. When the general's memoirs become available, we may hope for some illumination concerning recent history, but we need expect no contribution to the concept of alienation or the labor theory of value.)

This silence, especially on the part of ex-Nazis, may be a pity, insofar as we need to understand the Gods that Failed, and one of those failed gods is very much better endowed with literary post-mortems than the other one. Yet both these totalitarianisms had deep roots in European thought and experience, notably in the reaction to the Enlightenment and the attempts at its implementation. The great paradox of Marxism is that it was born of the insight that society cannot just be reordered in accordance with an enlightened blueprint, that one must allow for the realities and the constraints of inherited social organization and its productive base. In the course of implementing this idea, however, all economic, political and ideological hierarchies were fused into a single monopolistic system, and so the eventual collapse of the system has forced its heirs to cope precisely with a cleaner slate, a more complete tabula rasa, than other social reformers have had to face. The experiment engendered the very thing that it deemed impossible. Nazism, by contrast, was perversely pluralist, tolerating and making use of many inherited institutions and ideas.

To my knowledge, there is no single and clear formulation of the vision that inspired Nazism. But ideas were there, and one can try to get them clear. Nazism was not something that crawled out from under the floorboards, as Hannah Arendt claimed (perhaps to exonerate somewhat her ex-lover Martin Heidegger). It, too, was partly an attempt to complete the Enlightenment and partly a reaction against it. It took seriously the view that man was a part of nature, which in practice meant that in assessing man's real satisfactions and values, one had to pay more attention to his real drives such as aggression and domination than to abstract, cerebral and resentment-engendered ideals such as universalism and equality. (Hans Sluga's book documents the interesting fact that Hitler was familiar with Schopenhauer, but not with Nietzsche.)

Those misguided Judeo-Christian values, perpetuated by the Enlightenment in a secular idiom, had to be sloughed off. And this rejection of universalism was blended with another one, the communalistic insistence on gemeinschaft, which stressed what is specific in individual cultures rather than what is all-human, and accepted the closed and hierarchical nature of the community in which men found their true fulfillment. The community was to be seen as biological as well as cultural (or rather, the two were to be linked). Conflict and ruthlessness were the conditions for excellence, and for the perpetuation of the community so conceived.

This vision, however much one rejects it, is important; and its historical incarnation, the sources of its appeal and its actual consequences all need to be understood. From this viewpoint, the significance of Martin Heidegger is that he is widely acclaimed as the most important German philosopher of his time, that he was involved in Nazism (though the extent and the nature of his involvement are contested) and that he had ample time before, during and after the Nazi years to reflect on and to write about the matter. From Heidegger, then, one might expect illumination—but very little is forthcoming.

Heidegger's location in the history of philosophy lies at the intersection of phenomenology and existentialism. He was a pupil and a disciple of the Jewish thinker Edmund Husserl, who invented phenomenology, and he added a strong existentialist twist to the tradition. (Sluga puts it the other way round: he added ontology to an existentialist mood.) Phenomenology is a method of focusing on the objects of our thought as we actually think them, of eschewing the "natural viewpoint," or the viewpoint of a scientific age, which is based on the assumption that everything must be explained in terms of something else, something more elementary and general. This twist provided philosophy with a new sphere of investigation. More momentously, perhaps, it legitimated (and gave a name to) the *Lebenswelt*, the world-as-lived.

Once upon a time, there had been no world other than the lived world, and the lived world needed neither a name nor a defense. The influence of science, however, changed all that. It was but a small step, in Heidegger's thinking, to existentialism, which made a preoccupation of the human condition of being "thrown into the world." And to this Heidegger added a concern with ancient Greek thought, from a vantage point much influenced by Nietzsche, who denounced Socratic rationalism as a danger to vitality, analogous to the danger presented by modern rationalism. Conversely, the archaic Greek preoccupation with Being could be adduced as a corrective to the specialized, technological and instrumental aspects of modern thinking, to the overrating of specialized science and to the kind of epistemology-centered modern thought that focuses on man-the-alienated-investigator. That epistemological picture ignores the fact that man is already in the world, a troubled citizen or an anguished prisoner and not a foreign, detached and intellectual spy, which is what Descartes had tried to make him.

Does this kind of philosophizing lend itself in any a priori way to Nazism? The answer is not obvious. There would seem to be an overlap in what Heidegger and the Nazis rejected, but not in what they asserted. The Nazis, or some of them, had their doubts about Heidegger, from their own viewpoint. Or Erich Jaensch, for example, wrote in 1934 that "Heidegger's thought is cha

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acterized by the same obsession with hairsplitting distinctions as Talmudic thought. This is why it holds such extraordinary fascination for Jews, persons of Jewish ancestry and others with a similar mental make-up."

I take this quotation from Hugo Ott's book, whose original publication in Germany caused a stir. Jaensch also makes his appearance in Sluga's book, where the context of his hostility is better explored and documented. Ott does provide, however, a great deal of detailed and convincing material concerning Heidegger's institutional involvement with Nazism *and* de-Nazification. Anyone interested in the facts will find a mass of them assembled and documented here. Heidegger's involvement with Nazism and the Nazis is scarcely in doubt, and has not been in doubt for a considerable time; and yet the picture remains murky.

Ott lays no claim to philosophical training, and he admits that he does not really deal with Heidegger's position in the history of philosophy. But is philosophy not the essence of the controversy? And still Ott's book claims to be an intellectual portrait! I sympathize with Heidegger's own remark, cited by Ott, that his life was uninteresting and that only his work matters, though I would add that the implication and the impact of that work matter as well. Ott refrains, like Sluga, from dealing with the episode in Heidegger's life that is perhaps best known in America, namely his involvement with Arendt. (On her account, she was the love of his life. One thing, at any rate, is certain: there were no Nuremberg laws restricting access to Heidegger's bed.) The material, of course, is very interesting, but Ott presents it in an untidy and jerky way. There is no summary of the institutional context or the ideological context within which the various episodes occur. An outsider will have trouble making sense of it all.

If there is a general conclusion, it would seem to be that Heidegger was unquestionably guilty of involvement in Nazism, but that the sinner may have inwardly returned to the bosom of the Catholic Church, or in any case would have been warmly welcome there. This theme haunts the book, as a kind of counterpoint to the philosopher's documented involvement in Nazism. The problem is that the evidence for it is shadowy. In 1945, for instance, at a time when the French military authorities held his area, Heidegger contemplated organizing a seminar on the thought of Pascal. It never came off.

Ott notes correctly that this was "a clever tactical move," but he goes on to ask whether it was not also (given Heidegger's awareness of Pascal's devotion to the God of Abraham) a sign of a religious conversion. This is thin proof indeed. (Many of us conduct seminars on thinkers who do not tempt us.) The French, incidentally, though suspicious of Heidegger, were planning to arrange a meeting between him and Sartre as early as November 1945, with a view to possible lectures on existentialism in France. Ott doesn't tell us whether such a meeting took place, and he omits also to note that Heidegger evidently did not reciprocate Sartre's respect, and once referred to Sartre's most ambitious philosophical work as *Dreck.*

A somewhat sentimental epilogue more insistently suggests a final reconciliation with the Church, while candidly admitting that the question of whether such a return occurred is "by no means easy." The evidence for a positive conclusion is restricted to what others, not Heidegger himself, have said, more by way of hope or piety than observation; and to the reflection that, though the cross is absent from Heidegger's own gravestone, the crosses carved on the nearby graves of kin "appear to be touching the philosopher's grave as well." Ott seems keen to establish not only that Heidegger was a sinner, but also that he may have been a redeemed one. In an earlier passage, however, describing how Heidegger sought the aid of the Church in his struggle for rehabilitation, after failing to secure adequate help from Karl Jaspers, Ott notes that there could be no reconciliation between Heidegger's secular philosophizing and religious dogma. At one point Heidegger himself blamed the Church for blocking his full rehabilitation.

Ott asks in so many words whether Heidegger was the Prodigal Son, but then answers his question in a manner that can only be described as ambiguous, though not so ambiguous that those who wish for an edifying answer need lose hope. For all its documentation, then, Ott's book is finally an exercise in an odd kind of wish-fulfillment (let Faust be saved after all!): Heidegger was guilty, but we may hope that in the end he was redeemed by his ancestral faith, since one who loved his own roots so much, and was so devoted to the pursuit of truth, would surely return to the fold, and so on.

Heidegger certainly loved his roots. About the rest, I am not so sure. My own regret is not that Heidegger was involved in Nazism, but that his involvement was so wobbly. By this I do not mean that I wish Heidegger had gone about, say, breaking the windows of the offices of Jewish professors (instead of helping to exclude some, while aiding others to obtain posts abroad). Nor do I wish that he had been more eager to join the *Volkssturm* during that final agony of the Third Reich, instead of being anxious to evade such service and protesting

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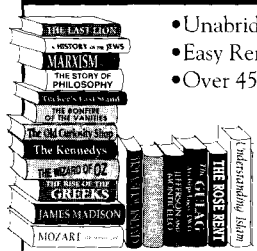

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against it, though I am a bit surprised that a man who attributed such importance to confrontation with nothingness should not have welcomed the opportunity to face it.

Perhaps Heidegger felt that he already knew all he needed to know about the void, so that any further investigation was redundant. If the void is always with us, there is no need to seek it out with zeal. It is interesting that other extreme romantics—Ernst Jünger, who had done so well in the first great war and found it a most rewarding experience, but who preferred cultural liaison work in the next great war; or Ernst von Solomon, who combined *Freikorps* service after the first war and the perpetration of political murder for the Fatherland with the eager study of the writings of Walter Rathenau, whom he helped to kill (can romanticism go further?)—also behaved as Heidegger did. Yet von Solomon at least left an incomparably more vivid account of what it was like to be a German nationalist under the Nazis and to have had a Jewish mistress than anything found in Heidegger.

What I mean is that a more vigorous engagement with Nazism, one way or the other, even if he had changed his mind, would have taught us more about the options of European thought and feeling at the time than can be gleaned from all these trimmings and ambiguities and vacillations. Heidegger was enthusiastic about the German resurgence and continued to refer to it even after the end of his active involvement in the party, but he changed his references to it in the postwar publication of his pre-war work, somewhat comically transforming "the inward truth and greatness of National socialism" into "the inward truth and greatness of the movement" (namely, the encounter between modern man and technology on a planetary scale). The text was re-edited so as to replace Nazism with some kind of benign ecological concern. Yet he also claimed to have been the critic of those who implemented precisely such a resurgence. The trouble is that his pro-Nazi statements are banal and his anti-Nazi statements seem nonexistent. Either way, one learns nothing about the dilemmas of the time.

To read Ott's book is to eavesdrop on a German family debate. A black sheep of the family is being discussed, his sins taken a little more seriously than they deserve to be, because his international fame causes his record to reflect more on the family's good name than would otherwise be the case; but the content of his work is barely considered and a vast amount of background is simply taken for granted. Sluga's book is quite different, and it makes up for many of Ott's deficiencies. Judging from his name and occasional stylistic idiosyncrasies, this Berkeley professor is German (the surname suggests an ultimate Polish origin), but he is much less concerned with proving to himself or to others that Heidegger's soul was saved, and instead he sets himself the laudable task of clarifying the political, institutional and philosophical context in which it all happened. In this he is very successful, though I am not sure whether someone without previous knowledge of the field will be much wiser after reading the summaries of philosophical positions.

Perhaps, given the limitations of an elegantly slim volume, that would be asking too much. As it is, Sluga provides a lot of very interesting information: for instance, that there were roughly 180 philosophers holding appointments in 1933, and of these only a dozen were members of the Nazi party. Thirty joined that year, and forty joined later, so that almost half were members by 1940. Since the German university system, especially at that time, cannot easily be translated into the American one, it would have been useful if the term "appointment" were carefully defined. Does it include junior ranks not properly paid? But the general picture offered by Sluga is convincing. The philosophical situation during the Weimar period was untidy and it remained untidy afterward. There was no effective *Gleichschaltung* in this sphere. There was no philosophical codification of Nazism, and Heidegger certainly did not attempt anything of the kind, let alone provide it. Likewise, he offered no retrospective account after the debacle. On both counts, his position was not idiosyncratic. It was, on the contrary, typical of the wider intellectual climate, passing from compliance to amnesia.

Sluga does not think that the Nazis had any philosophy. As far as superficial evidence is concerned, no doubt this is correct: there is no codified Nazi credo. It is extremely interesting to learn that Hitler, very late in his life, still observed that freedom of inquiry obtained in the natural sciences, and that philosophy was an extension of those sciences. A charismatic leader makes do without charismatic doctrine, at least in formal philosophy. In a deeper sense, however, there was a coherent cluster of values and ideas—nationalism, biologism, communalism, hierarchy, corporatism, acceptance of authority, territoriality, aggression, rejection of compassion—that governed the policies of the regime. This cluster did not simply spring out of the head of Hitler; it has its roots in European history and ideas, and deserves investigation, even if the Nazis did not make it easier for us by leaving behind a corpus of authoritative texts.

Sluga's own philosophical position inspires his *Fragestellung*, but it does not obscure the story. Although he condemns the German philosophical generations in question, his own grappling with the relationship of philosophy and politics leads him toward a relativism that would make it hard to judge one period by the standards of another. He comes close to saying not so much that the past is another country, but that it is at least beyond judgment. Ethics look to the future; and this view, once elaborated so as to make value judgments compatible with determinism—moral judgments make sense in a determined world just because they have an effe

After you left,

that perpetual summer sun became unpleasant.
It had an ozone minus feel about it,
everyone short tempered and too hot.

So when the impacted storm gathered and broke,
we ran to the East window to look out.
The cwm had already spumed its rolling ghost,

Moelfre was muffled, the Rhinogs hidden or eaten,
thunder thundered, lightning fired and missed
us—maiming, I think, the electricity grid.

Then welcome rain, provisional, unfriendly.
The sheep stood backward to it, stony still,
looking, or trying to look, invisible.

Nothing electric at *Pwllymarch* presently works.
I'm writing by candlelight. Supper's half cooked
on the fire; the wine is good.

"Happiness shouldn't be so important."
About four square inches on the canvas
is a piece of luck.

ANNE STEVENSON

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on the future—seems here to be used to abolish retrospective morality. Whereas Heidegger, for Ott, may be saved by a secret return to his ancestral faith, for Sluga he may still benefit from a universal philosophical amnesty, granted to the past as such. Perhaps Sluga, who has previously written about Gottlob Frege, revered as a crucial founder of modern logic but a rabid racist and early Nazi, will eventually expound these rather strange views somewhere else; here they helped him organize the narrative, but happily they do not cloud it.

Those who consider Heidegger to have been a great thinker may be pained by his Nazism. To me, it is less obvious that he had the intellectual stature that would endow this controversy with great importance. It is a matter of deep significance, by contrast, that Andrei Sakharov, a great, brilliant and humane man, was once able to support the Stalinist system, knowing full well how it treated its slave labor. *That* is important and troubling. Heidegger's flirtation with totalitarianism, by contrast, was sordid rather than demonic or tragic. It lacked incisiveness and character, intellectually as well as morally.

So why even compare a hero and a genius with a petty sinner? My point is not merely that Sakharov is in a different class morally or intellectually. It is that, given the difficulty of his situation and the strength of the contending forces in his milieu, I find Sakharov's hesitations more forgivable. For Sakharov's moral crises were real. His thought was about the real world. Even his romantic life was more genuine. (Sakharov's second marriage appears to have been one of those cases of a personal relation that crucially affects the thought of a great man, and thereby has some impact on history.) Heidegger's love life, for all his romanticism, seems more in the nature of a hobby. Neither the fact that he committed *Rassenschande*, nor the fact that the movement that he hailed as national resurgence so stigmatized his love, stirred him to deep thought. He is devoid of serious reflection on the fact that the national regeneration of Germany stigmatized and persecuted both his teacher and his lover, and would have murdered both of them given the chance.

Or, if the comparison with Sakharov looks too exacting, then compare Heidegger with Jan Patočka, the Czech philosopher and eventual dissident, whose reflections on the historic roots of the crisis of his own nation, on its failure to resist either Nazism or communism, were published posthumously in Prague this year. Morally, the comparison is most unfair to the Czech: Patočka ended his life as an unambiguous opponent of totalitarianism, though it took him a long time to be driven to that point. Intellectually, however, the comparison is apposite: Patočka's philosophical background was virtually identical with Heidegger's. Both were phenomenologists, long-standing students of Husserl (though I do not know whether Patočka, like Heidegger, failed to attend Husserl's funeral), and both were preoccupied with ancient Greek thought and Nietzsche.

I find Patočka's purely philosophical writings almost as difficult as Heidegger's, but his historical reflections are incisive and rich, whether or not one agrees with them. Is there anything to compare with this final reckoning in the work of Heidegger? There is nothing. Instead one finds bizarre but confident prophecies. In a text first published in 1966, for instance, Heidegger claims that cybernetics is about to take over the human sciences:

> No prophecy is required to recognize that the sciences now establishing themselves will soon be determined and steered by the new fundamental science which is called cybernetics. This science corresponds to the determination of man as an acting social being.

When the record of intellectuals in the face of totalitarianism is examined, Heidegger's file will be relevant, but his own testimony will not tell us much. His involvement with Nazism lacked depth, and his withdrawal from it was so muted as to be imperceptible. There was evasion perhaps, followed by amnesia. We may grant him his wish that his thought, rather than his life, be considered. But that's just it: we learn precious little from his thought about the dilemmas of his time. That is the real case against him.

ERNEST GELLNER is the author most recently of *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* (Routledge).

The Mirage

BY WALTER LAQUEUR

The Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite by Robert D. Kaplan

(The Free Press, 333 pp., $24.95)

A Place Among Nations: Israel and the World by Benjamin Netanyahu

(Bantam Books, 467 pp., $24.95)

There has been, for obvious reasons, a notable decrease in the publication of books on topics such as nuclear strategy. The Middle East, for equally obvious reasons, could be next in line. Too much has been written on it anyway, and there was an internal imbalance in the literature: "Middle East" became a synonym for relations between Israel and the Arabs, about which little could be said that was new, but there were few serious books on Turkey, Iraq, Iran, the Maghreb or more generally the social situation in the Arab world. In the wake of The Handshake, this may now change, and even if there will be setbacks on the road to peace, the Arab-Israeli conflict will be, until further notice, a local conflict, and no longer a threat to world peace. And so the books on the Middle East now appearing on the market, good, bad or indifferent, could well be among the last of a genre going out of fashion. The age of "Arabists," of passionate quarrels about the rights and the wrongs of the Zionist case, is drawing to a close. And the price of oil is at an all-time low.

"Arabist" is a strange term. It does not refer to persons dealing professionally with a particular subject, such as "Hebraists" or "physicists" or "pathologists." The term has a certain connotation. As Richard Crossmann described an Arabist in the 1940s: "He is in love with the Arabs because they have given him a contract with ultimate values which he missed at home. There he would have remained an unfulfilled personality; in the Middle East he has

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found himself." Arabists, in brief, are the opposite of Orientalists. They are not arrogant, supercilious foreign experts with contempt for all things Arab; they are romantic, deferential, deeply appreciative of Arab values and Arab ways of life.

But this description covers only a part of the phenomenon. There is another school of Arabists that is not awestruck by Arab civilization or charmed by Arab hospitality. This second school, not so much British as American, is instead convinced that the founding of Israel was a political mistake that harmed the interests of the United States in the Middle East. For many Zionists, an Arabist is simply an anti-Semite by another name; and so it is useful that Robert D. Kaplan, who has interviewed many American Arabists, shows that this is an over-simplification. While the Arabists find Israel a major annoyance and its Jewish supporters irritating, only a few of them have been anti-Semites. Generally the Arabists believed that (as Bernard Lewis once put it) if it were not for Israel, American businessmen would get contracts in the region, strategic planners would get military bases and missionaries would get converts.

The Arabist phenomenon goes back to the nineteenth century, when American missionaries came to the Near East and founded the American University in Beirut, as well as various schools and hospitals. Their children frequently went into the diplomatic service, and the role that these children played reminds one of the role played by the descendants of American missionaries to Japan and China, who also entered diplomatic and academic life. This was not a specifically American phenomenon; some well-known citizens of the Crown, from Lady Stanhope to Gertrude Bell, from Doughty to Lawrence and Philby, were fascinated by the Arab East and made it their second (or their first) home. Some of them clearly belonged to the "mad dogs and Englishmen" type, but they wrote fine Edwardian English and their books had a greater appeal for the reading public than those of the less exalted, more pedestrian Americans. They had no particular interest in the Jews, of whom there were many fewer in the first place. The Jews lacked social graces, they had no small talk, they were forever complaining and demanding and they always implied that culturally they were equal to the British, if not superior.

Kaplan has written an entertaining and knowledgeable book about the vanishing tribe of Arabists. The first part of his study is, broadly speaking, known to the experts; it is based in the main on the written recollections of American emissaries of a bygone age. In his second part, however, he breaks fresh ground: to the best of my knowledge, no one before Kaplan has interviewed so many of the leading members of the club so systematically and in such depth. This is a fair book. Kaplan's subjects emerge, by and large, as a likeable lot, and even when he disagrees with them, it is not shrilly.

In fact, he leans back a bit too much in his attempt to be fair, and the weaknesses of the Arabists do not appear clearly enough. Foremost among those weaknesses was an advanced case of *localitis*, that is, excessive exposure to, and therefore extensive identification with, the moods and the interests of the localities with which they dealt. This did not matter too much for American foreign policy; the impact of the Arabists was seldom decisive, and it was certainly less than Israeli politicians imagined. More serious were their misjudgments: the Arabists had grown up in a world that had many attractive, even idyllic features, and so they failed to grasp (as their British colleagues failed to grasp) that the ways they had known were quickly disappearing, giving way to a harsh, violent, strident kind of life: the world of Saddam Hussein, religious militancy, and terrorism, in which many of the good old virtues were lost.

BINYAMIN NETANYAHU BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Those Arabists who observed this change, moreover, erroneously concluded that it was the consequence of Zionism, the fault of the Israelis. They failed to understand that they were witnessing the Arab instance of a phenomenon that was fairly widespread in the post-colonial world. They did not see that Israel, far from splitting the Arab world, provided a measure of cohesion and unity. And they were a little naïve, a little weak, in their political and psychological understanding: they expected gratitude for their good deeds. This was most tragically illustrated by the fate of Malcolm Kerr, a leading American Arabist and president of the American University in Beirut, who was murdered by local terrorists.

Much of this now belongs, happily, to the past. There are not that many old-style Arabists-by-emotion in the diplomatic service, and the academic Arabists are fighting a rearguard action to explain to the West that Muslim "fundamentalism" should not be demonized that it is really not as bad as some misguided intellectuals say it is. For the time being, though, as one watches the developments in Algeria, in Egypt and at th

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World Trade Center, the reflections of these academics provide little comfort.

A little while ago, following a bruising and occasionally comic struggle, Binyamin Netanyahu became the head of the Likud. The views of the leader of the main opposition party in Israel about his country, its neighbors and the world at large are, of course, interesting; or they should be interesting. But what is Netanyahu's message in what his publisher advertises as this "evocative and meticulously researched book which was five years in the making"? In essence, that the Palestinian question was fabricated by Israel's enemies; that the demographic threat to Israel is a chimera; that the PLO does not admire Herzl and that Haj Amin al Husseini was not a Lover of Zion either; that Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasing Hitler was wrong; that millions of Jews perished in the Holocaust, which must never happen again, and that only a strong Israel can prevent it. Also included are the full texts of the League of Nations mandate for Palestine of 1922, the PLO charter and U.N. Resolution 242.

A look at the index of names shows that the person referred to most often in this book is, overwhelmingly, Yasir Arafat, and he is followed by Saddam Hussein. David Ben Gurion and Menachem Begin appear just twice, very briefly; and they are upstaged by Rafiq Natshe (whoever he might be), Abu Iyad and a variety of other Abus. Even Jabotinsky is pushed aside by Nasser. There is clearly something lopsided here. One would expect from the leader of a political party some details about his ideals, his values and his policies, rather than observations about the obscure Mr. Natshe and "Abu Hitler."

How, for instance, to make Israel strong? Netanyahu's basic idea seems to be that Israel may be strengthened by increasing the defense budget and by clinging to Gaza. How would he deal with the economy and the emigration from Russia? How does he intend to solve the Palestinian problem, by making Israel a bi-national state or by expelling the Arabs? How would he protect Israel's civil population in a coming war? Netanyahu is an architect by training, not a historian or a student of Arab culture. For some bizarre reason, however, he chose to write a book mainly dealing with Arafat, who has been written about better and many times before, instead of trying to make a more or less plausible case for the foreign and domestic policies of the Likud.

What purpose, in other words, does this book serve? This question returns us to the matter of why Netanyahu became leader of his party in the first place. Some individuals rise to positions of leadership by dint of character or intellect or charisma, or by a combination of these qualities. Others succeed because they were at the right place at the right time, which sometimes means that they were preferred as a candidate of compromise over stronger candidates. So, why Netanyahu?

My own enthusiasm for the Likud is limited, but there are such political parties in every country, and it would be unnatural if Israel, alone among the nations, did not have one. With a historian's detachment, therefore, I have tried to find the positive features of Netanyahu's predecessors. (The weaknesses in their political thinking were obvious enough to me.) Jabotinsky was a man of wide education, a fine writer, a brilliant orator and a charismatic leader. Begin, despite his demagoguery and his hysteria (and, later, his depressions), also had certain qualities of leadership; he was widely read in history and politics in several languages, and his manners were those of a Polish nobleman of bygone days. Shamir had not the wisdom of a Socrates nor the oratorical gifts of a Demosthenes; he found making decisions very painful; but he was a model citizen in his private life, and lived, like Begin, very modestly, beyond the reach of scandal or embarrassment. And neither he nor Begin was driven by overweening personal ambition.

But I am hard pressed to compose a similar laudation for their successor, and his book certainly does not make kindness any easier. Netanyahu's critics, whose number is not small, argue that there is simply less to him than meets the eye, that he is a man of the sound bite, that he was elected mainly owing to the financial backing of wealthy friends. Of course, he is new to the job, though his misjudgment of the glad, exhausted Israeli mood in the wake of the recent breakthrough does not show him to be a very quick learner. What all of Netanyahu's predecessors had in common was that they were true believers. Could it be that he belongs to a new breed of politician, a breed less burdened by principles? If that is so, then he may forget or overlook what he once said and once wrote should he ever find himself in power; and in the light of this book, that would be a blessing.

WALTER LAQUEUR is chairman of the International Research Council at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and author of *Black Hundred: The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia* (HarperCollins).

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Big sir

THOUSANDS MIGHT HAVE TURNED down the invitation, but not I: "the superintendent of the United States Military Academy invites you to experience a day at West Point, meet with cadets and faculty at Cullum Hall, attend a review on the Plain and a tailgate followed by the Army-Western Michigan football game on Saturday, the 30th of October." I not only accepted, I took my wife and two youngest children with me. I was eager to see how West Point is doing in the post-cold war, post-conservative era of Commander in Chief Bill Clinton. Well, the day wasn't much. I talked to only two cadets, the parade was called off on account of rain, the tailgate had to be held indoors and Army, its star running back injured, lost to Western Michigan 20-7. Fortunately, I had arranged to come the day before to lecture cadets (on their least favorite subject, Clinton) and address a seminar of the social science faculty. Only two or three cadets dozed during my talk. Those who stayed awake asked good questions, even a few I could answer. The faculty, mostly young Army officers, had smart things to say about politics and public policy. That day was sunny and crisp. Before the lecture a cadet took us on a walking tour. And we ate at the mess hall—tacos and rice—along with roughly 4,000 cadets. In the evening we went to a men's soccer game, which West Point won. So how is West Point doing? Not badly at all.

MAYBE I'M BIASED. MY FATHER went to the military academy (class of '34). So did my grandfather ('02) and uncle ('30). In fact, I came within an eyelash of going there myself. I got an Army Reserve appointment. The catch was I had to spend a year in the Army to get it, a year that cooled me on making the military a career. I didn't want a West Point education either. It was mostly science and engineering in those days, with few electives. Now, while a semester of "terrain analysis" is still required, there are plenty of electives, and cadets can major in economics, literature, political science, etc. Upon graduation, they don't automatically spend their career on bivouac at godforsaken posts. Bright graduates, plus a few nongraduates, are recruited to teach at West Point. In preparation, they're dispatched to top colleges—Princeton, Harvard, Stanford, MIT—for advanced degrees. I met one of them, Capt. Joe O'Bryan, last spring as he was finishing his master's in economics at Princeton. I told him I would love to visit West Point. Once he joined the faculty this fall, he arranged it. So I guess it's fair to say I invited myself.

WHY ARE THESE GOOD DAYS FOR West Point, despite Clinton and the defense downsizing? For starters, as the military shrinks, West Pointers will be more dominant than ever. They're guaranteed jobs as Army officers, indeed required to serve five years. But only a small fraction of men and women taking ROTC at civilian colleges—Colin Powell was a ROTC graduate of CCNY—will be called up. With an unstable economy, the promise of a job is a distinct attraction. Thus applications are up, the dropout rate down. "When times aren't good in the country, they're good for us," says an admissions officer. At a briefing I attended for high school students and their parents, the officer assured a mother that any cadet who finishes four years "won't come back and live with you." She looked relieved. One more thing: there's still a lot of prestige and some glamour to being a cadet. Clinton acknowledged as much when he spoke at the West Point graduation last May.

CADET LIFE IS REGIMENTED, BUT then that's a selling point. In a glossy brochure for aspiring cadets, West Point is touted as "exciting ... unique ... competitive ... organized." Even my visit was organized with a minutely detailed itinerary. On October 30 at 0845, "Move to Cullum Hall." At 0900, "Continental breakfast with superintendent's party in Cullum Foyer." At 1000 "Move to reviewing stand." And so on. Cadets have to show up in formation outside their barracks twice a day, first at 6:25 a.m., then at 11:45 a.m. They wear uniforms at all times. Taps is at 11:30 p.m., lights out at midnight. Cadets also march a lot. In the summer they have military training. It's not like attending Dartmouth. But it's not like the old days either. West Point is now co-ed, about one-tenth female. Plebes, or freshmen, no longer have to sit at attention while eating. They are allowed to watch T.V. on weekends and have a radio in their room second semester. There's no hazing, a cadet insisted, only "on-the-spot corrections." Cadets boast of a recent rating of college social life that put West Point 299th out of 300 schools (the University of Chicago was 300th). "Our idea of fun is different," says Cadet Erin Burns. It better be.

WEST POINT IS EXTRAORDINARILY public relations-conscious. It treats visitors like potentates. My seats at the football game, for instance, were on the 50-yard line, right behind those of Admiral David Jeremiah, the acting chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. To make him feel at home, Jeremiah was summoned to lead a cheer. (I wasn't summoned.) Cadets are used as ambassadors to the public, especially to VIPs, and they're very good at it. The first word out of a cadet's mouth is invariably "sir." Cadets were assigned to mingle with guests at the superintendent's brunch. They call it "hey you" duty since they are supposed to break into conversation with strangers. Five cadets were assigned to eat lunch with us at the mess hall. We sat next to the tables for the football team. When Cadet Todd Morgenfeld climbed to the "poop deck" to read announcements to the entire corps, he invited my son and daughter along. My son went. At the football game, cadets greeted us as we entered the superintendent's loge, covered so we wouldn't get rained on, and directed us to our seats. But don't get the wrong idea. These folks are not robots. My kids were also supposed to eat dinner at the mess hall, but the cadet assigned to them went to the wrong meeting place. No big deal. Earlier, my children were excited when they encountered the cadet who had taken us on a walking tour. He was "walking the area," marching for hours as punishment. Maybe he had handed in a paper late.

WORKING OFF DEMERITS IS CHILD'S play compared to the deadly serious side of West Point: preparing young men for war. A few months after Desert Storm, General Norman Schwartzkopf (class of '57) told cadets that on graduation he had been assured that American soldiers would never fight another war. But he fought in four. His speech remains a topic of discussion here. As best I could tell, cadets understand exactly what Schwartzkopf was getting at.

FRED BARNES

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Urban Legend

In California and elsewhere, we have seen some big fights about vouchers—using public money to send kids to private and parochial schools—and undoubtedly there are more to come. Many of the issues get to be very complicated. For example, to what extent, if at all, should private schools accepting taxpayers' money be regulated? And will vouchers save money or cost billions? So voters trying to decide about California's Proposition 174 were faced with lots of conflicting and confusing analysis about the results of passing this initiative.

But voucher supporters have now come up with a simple argument that they consider a clincher. They say that all you have to do is look at the huge number of public school teachers who send their kids to private schools. The figure bandied about is 40 or sometimes 50 percent of teachers, in comparison with about only 12 to 14 percent of the American public as a whole. If public school teachers are not willing to trust their children to public schools, voucher supporters ask, why should other parents be? The *Wall Street Journal* summarized this argument in the headline of an October 25 editorial: "Teacher Knows Best" (undoubtedly the first time in memory that the *Wall Street Journal* ever thought this).

Now, if the 40 percent figure were accurate, you'd have to take it seriously, even if there were complicating factors, like finding that teachers were disproportionately Catholic and sending their kids to parochial schools for religious reasons. But the figure turns out to be totally wrong.

It's what Gerald Bracey, writing in *Education Week* (September 29, 1993), calls an urban legend—a tall tale, like the one about the alligators in New York City sewers or the jumping bean in the diet pill, that gains wide acceptance simply because it is too intriguing and horrifying *not* to be true.

In fact, there are a number of studies and surveys showing that the percentage of public school teachers who send their children to private schools is nothing like 40 percent. According to a Metropolitan Life survey conducted by Louis Harris in 1984, 14 percent of public school teachers nationwide send their children to private schools as opposed to 12 percent of the general public.

A study of 1980 U.S. Census data from 12 states (not necessarily representative of the entire country) is generally consistent with the Metropolitan Life survey. On the other hand, surveys done by the Gallup organization for the National Education Association (NEA) between 1986 and 1989 found numbers that were considerably lower: 8 to 10 percent of teachers as a whole and 10 to 14 percent of urban teachers send their youngsters to private schools.

Far from abandoning the public schools, public school teachers send their children in much greater numbers than other parents with comparable education levels.

These figures show that teachers do not send their kids to private schools on a vastly different scale from other U.S. parents, as is claimed by the *Wall Street Journal*, William Bennett and George Will. Furthermore, when teachers are compared with other college graduates—in other words, with people at the same education and income levels—it becomes clear that they send their kids to private schools *less often* than other people of comparable socioeconomic status. As data gathered by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) show (see table), the higher the education level, the more likely parents are to send kids to private schools and vice versa. Considering that about 12 percent of parents in the general population send their youngsters to private schools—and this figure includes parents who are dropouts and high school graduates only—you would expect the percentage of teachers, all of whom are college graduates, to be far higher than it is—perhaps even 40 percent, instead of a figure down in the teens. So, far from abandoning the public schools, public school teachers send their children in much greater numbers than other parents with comparable education levels—and of course, as the *Wall Street Journal* says, "Teacher knows best."

But even if we had no Gallup Polls or census or NAEP figures, there would be a surefire way of knowing whether huge numbers of teachers have their kids in private schools. These people are all members of AFT and NEA, and if 40 or 50 percent had a chance of getting a $2,600 voucher, you can be sure the unions would be in political turmoil. These teachers, many of whom have been under salary freezes for a number of years and have had to accept contract givebacks, would be demanding that the union support vouchers for their kids.

Teachers spend a good part of their lives in schools and know them well, so the logic of the people who devised this indicator was strong. However, their numbers are way off. It will be interesting to see whether they will continue to embrace the logic of their argument or keep reiterating their faulty numbers.

Education Level of Parents for Public and Private School Students in NAEP Sample, Grade 12

	Some HS	Grad HS	Post HS	Grad Coll
Mother Public	14.1%	32.9%	24.1%	25.1%
Father Public	13.9	25.1	22	31.2
Mother Private	7.2	27.9	26.2	36.2
Father Private	8.5	17.9	21.1	47.5

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1993 by Albert Shanker.

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